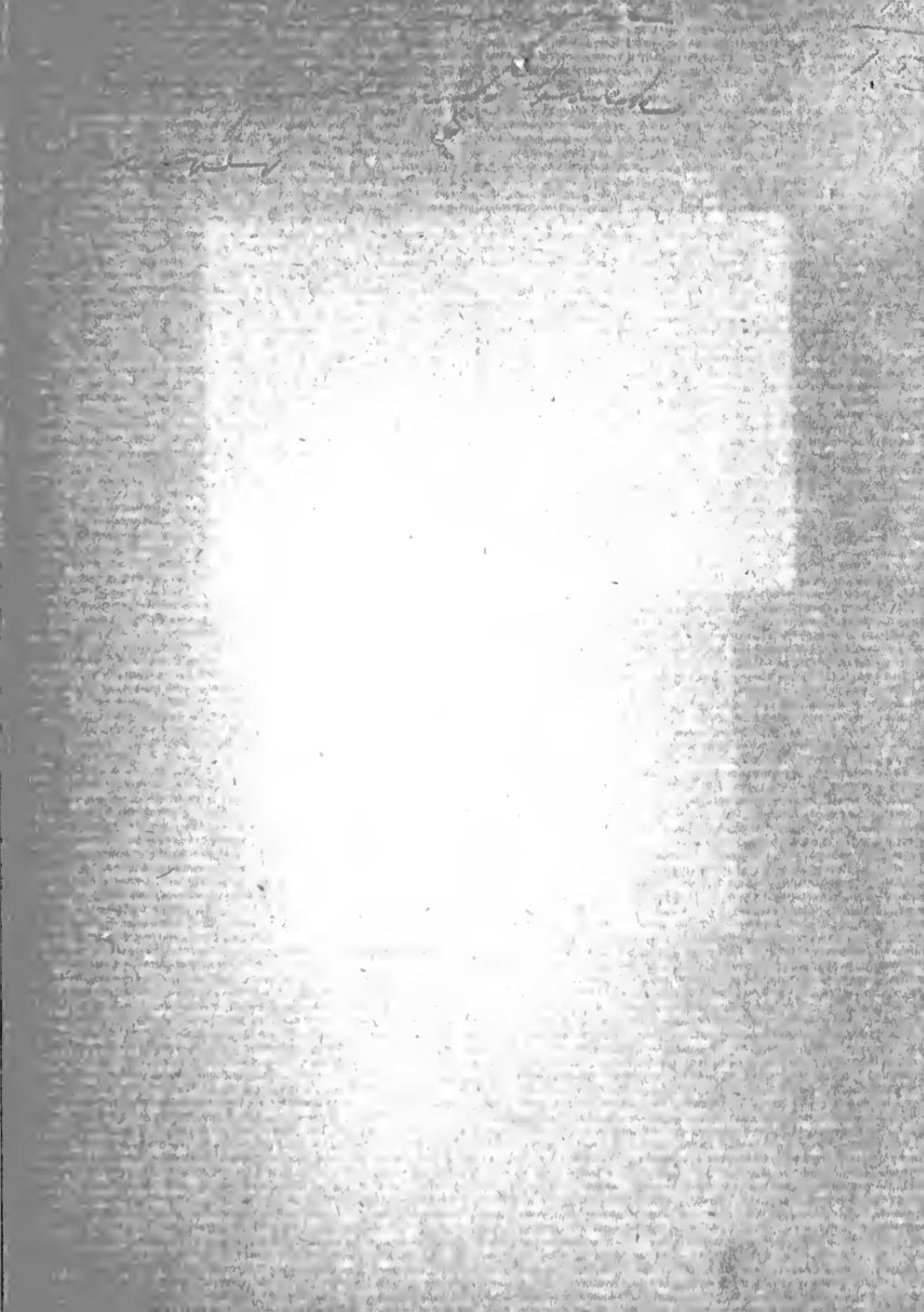
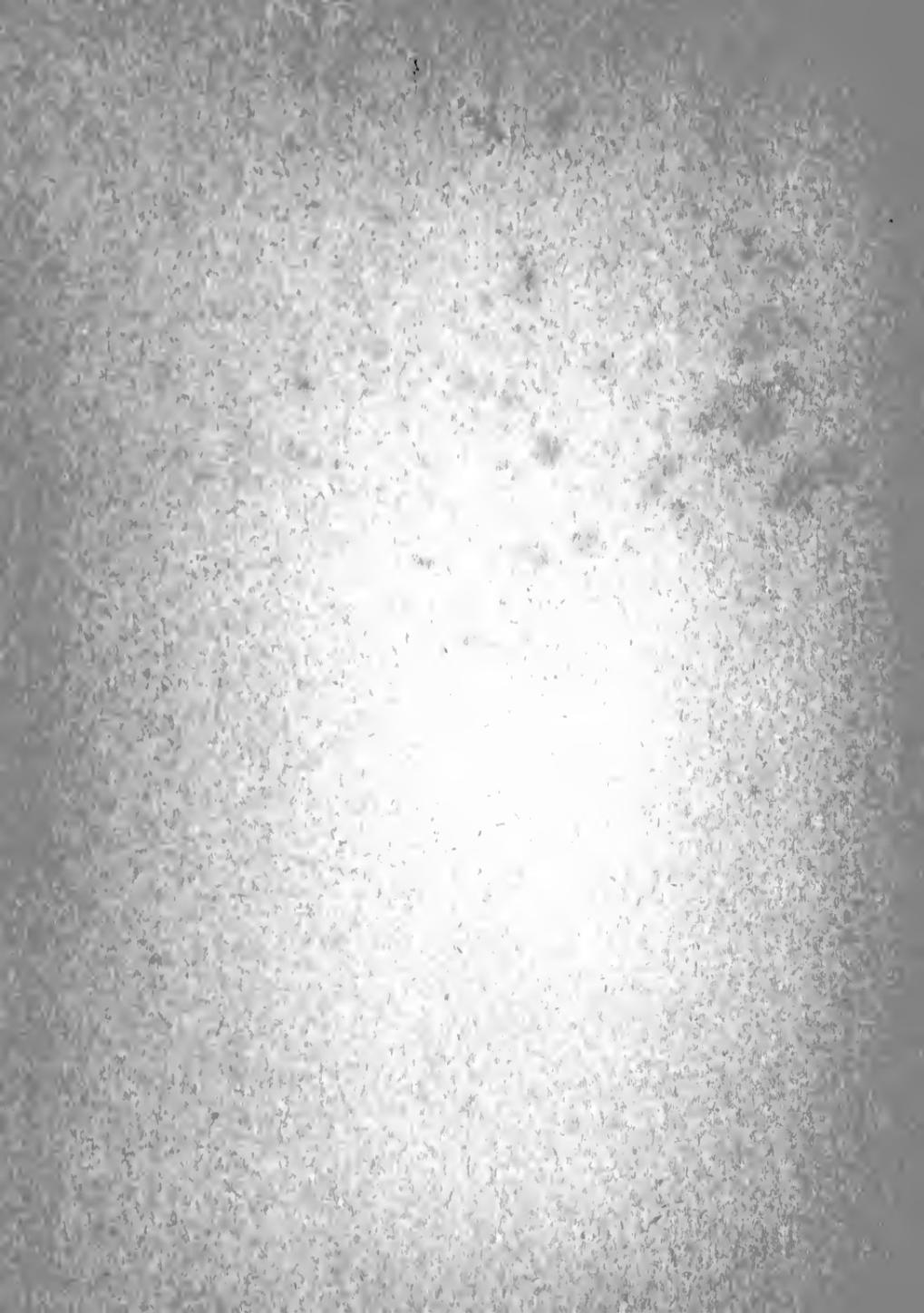






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6824412



"JYPORE" & "CHESTNUTS"

have already appeared in

"THE DOME"



PENINSULAR
AND ORIENTAL



THE very letters P. & O. hold a subtle element of Romance. Besides their delicate suggestion of the keyboard—which only the Unmusical will detect,—they concentrate in them the essential soul of Thomas Cook and his white umbrella'd army of tourists,—this miserable race to which I have the honour to belong. For I too bear the White Umbrella—the Mark of the Beast.

Peninsular and Oriental! the soft-linked words have the long, lazy undulation of a calm sea.

Peninsular and Oriental! the luxurious beauty of the cadence breathes of heat and spices and bright bronzed skins and leagues of cool blue water fringed with foam. I own I prefer its landward significance. For I hate the sea! hate it with a gentle, resigned hatred, which is quite implacable. I have often striven to bring myself to a better frame of mind. I have leaned through my port on wild, wonderful tropic nights and watched the dark, shining water slipping dizzily past, embroidered with fantastic arabesques in phosphorescent foam—that strange mosaic of the sea with its ever-varying design of light and darkness. I have been compelled by my primeval and cultivated beauty senses to admit

PENINSULAR to the glittering, unwinking stars that the sea
AND is indeed most beautiful,—and, with a sigh, I
ORIENTAL have returned to my basin, which has been
(January 1898) painted a lovely tawny colour to comfort me.

I have studied the Mediterranean at mid-day
when its colour is glorious as the Prelude of
“Lohengrin” or “Tristram of Lyonesse,” when

“The wave’s subtler emerald is pierced through
With the utmost heaven’s inextricable blue,”

and the frosted sapphire has left me unmoved—
psychologically.

The tender beauty of the Suez Canal alone
stirs my enthusiasm. I think the low line of
the breakwater (from the hither side) of Port
Said is the fairest sight I have ever seen. For
glitter and flash and movement the Mediterranean
perhaps takes the cake, but the palm of all deeper
loveliness I award to the Suez Canal. In truth,
the Suez Canal has a curious, subtle fascination
which the Philistine shall never grasp, a delicate,
ascetic beauty rather suggested than displayed,
a beauty of implication not of revelation. The
beauty of the Suez Canal, like the love of the
Celt, is rather a sentiment than a passion—
those long desolate lines of the desert, grey-
white sand and stunted dark bushes ; the

occasional dreamy caravans of tawny camels, the picturesque mud-coloured Arabs bawling incessantly for "backsheesh" (that *idle fixe* of these romantic nomads); a *fin-de-siècle* little Egyptian jackal, which watches the big P. & O. steamer from a sandbank with manifest unconcern; the soft chrysophrase of the canal water; the turquoise sky; the bright little red-tiled stations, ringed with trees—now and then an ambitious palm—at intervals along the water-way; the harmoniously wretched native villages here and there; the vague eastward caravan route to Syria; above all, the wonderfully soft colours of sunset, of a Chopinesque daintiness, reflected on the far-away purple sandhills;—all these things combine to make a bizarre and attractive picture, monotonous in spite of its manifold detail. Its very monotony proclaims its intense personality. And when the poetic Southern moon, which can fire the heart of a tourist or the top of a soda-water bottle, shines on the desert, and water and distance are veiled in a silver haze of illusion, the beauty of the Suez Canal seems to me to share the psychology of Chopin's most mournful preludes and the wonderful elemental sadness of Tchaikovsky's music.

PENINSULAR (Truly, to me, Tchaikovsky always seems to be
AND the Port Said of Music, for in him the East and
ORIENTAL the West meet.)
(January 1898)

Here in the desert it is *intime*; the sea is so cold and devoid of sympathetic suggestion. Indeed, the mental monotony of life on the open sea is only surpassed by its physical variety.

But perhaps you are a good sailor. I know that some people look on a P. & O. voyage as a kind of foretaste of Paradise with the gold harps kindly omitted; and these same worthy souls usually busy themselves with deck coits, bull, and all the fearful and wonderful inventions of the P. & O. Company, to fill up the time between breakfast and lunch, lunch and tea, tea and dinner—time happily short enough to be bridged by half a dozen cigarettes. But if one hates all games, as I do, and, on occasion, grows a-weary of curry and conversation and the society of the ship's cat, what can they do save sleep or read? Sometimes, I admit, you find a fellow-passenger or two worthy of inspection, but then the sea air always takes their hair out of curl sooner or later. Between the sea and the sky one can rarely be bored; between the spinster on the warpath and the grass-widow from Calcutta, that lamentable

state is not impossible to a man of imagination —as I am. R. L. S. has most maliciously hinted that when a man cannot be happy aboard ship his wits are no brighter than they should be; but then poor dear Stevenson had such quaint tastes. He chose the dullest subjects for his angelic style — Walking Tours and Samoan Islands where they have no Opera.

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The one thing I thoroughly enjoy at sea is the Ship's Concert; this touches the zenith of self-satisfied incapacity. Charming girls, who have had no musical training whatever, and are incomprehensibly proud of the fact, get up and sing or scream sentimental ballads to their admiring admirers. I recall the refrain of one song, sung by a damsel with a voice like the ship's siren,—“Whisper, and I shall hear!” The words hardly overstated the case. Our amateur tenor, too, though less acute of voice and a trifle shyer, is even more distressing than our soprano. He usually bawls stolidly and serenely through the whole weary tale of his love—and then accepts an encore. His home-made accompanist (so to speak) is also a separate and a subtle joy. She thumps the long-suffering dyspeptic piano till its rusty strings give forth

PENINSULAR piteous remonstrances, and she keeps good time
AND too,—no humouring of the singer, no philander-
ORIENTAL ing *tempo-rubato*.
(January 1898)

Then some amateur reciter will get up and pour forth, with contortions suggesting (saving your presence) *mal-de-mer*, some dreary comic verse at which we are expected to laugh—on whom we are expected to smile. Oh! a Ship's Concert is a merry thing, heard above the reproachful ground-bass of the waves, breaking rhythmically on the ship's sides as we steam ahead.

I always rejoice when we come into port and drop anchor for a few hours; the cessation of movement and the change of noise are so soothing. Truly, the noises on board ship are marvellous in number and variety; they are always washing the decks, washing dishes, taking steam baths, hammering, tinkering,—and the coal-shoot (which is invariably in my cabin) ! ! !

Yet all this is “but as the sound of lyres and flutes” to the hardened traveller; through his manifold experience he gains something of the sweet indifference of La Gioconda.

To return to the subject of ports, these havens are few between Brindisi and Bombay (did I

mention I was bound for Bombay?,—Port Said, PENINSULAR
Suez, and Aden being the only ones. Port AND
Said, my nurse taught me, is the wickedest
place on earth, and I must say that it bears
its Satanic honours meekly and unobtrusively.
Suez is, I believe, chiefly remarkable for its
mention in Kipling's "Mandalay"—

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"Ship me somewhere east of Suez, where the best is like
the worst,

Where there aren't no Ten Commandments an' a man can
raise a thirst."

Aden is a great rock in a very thirsty land;—
we saw the sharp Asiatic peak long before we
reached it, a mere shadow on the pale, hot
horizon. We anchored far from the shore; the
cool stretch of rippling, chrysophrase water looked
delicious, moreover, because it was studded with
rocking native boats and canoes manned by
Somalis, Indians, Arabs, in every stage of
picturesque dress and undress — emerald tur-
bans, rose-jacynth turbans, white Arab gar-
ments, chocolate, bronze, and coffee skins.
Most charming of all, the little nigger boys in
their frail canoes, with their beautiful, polished
bronze personalities and their white teeth,
shouting incessantly, "'Ave a dive!" and ab-

PENINSULAR solutely refusing to dive for aught but “white
AND
ORIENTAL money” in the deep water “green, dense and
(January
1898) dim, delicious, bred o’ the sun.” This recalls
an artistic refusal to play to a five shilling
audience. Verily, life is the same the world
over—be it in ivory and gold or ebony and
bronze.

The insinuating Arab merchants smile wistfully as they hold up ostrich feathers, sword-fish skeletons, and many-coloured artistic grass baskets, which appeal at once to the soul by their uselessness and their quaintness, surpassing qualities both. But the wary traveller turns a deaf ear to these sons of the desert, for he has been this way before—when he was almost a boy.

Of all dull seas, commend me to the Indian Ocean! You steam and you steam and you steam for days without seeing anything save the unbroken arc of the sea-line on the horizon,—never the silvery dip of a sea-gull’s wing, never an island, never a ship, never a whale. I have heard many legends of flying-fish, it is true, but never have I met one in the Indian Ocean—sometimes known as the Arabian Sea. I have seen nothing but the countless white horses—white elephants for size—of the North-East

Monsoon, which are neither so spirited nor so PENINSULAR
spiritual (alas !) as the wonderful white horses
in Watts's picture. Yet they were most beautiful
to look upon if not to ride upon. The sea was
like a molten jewel, the mountainous waves lifted
blue glittering facets to the sun, and the creamy
billowing foam-crests were dashed into fine spin-
drift as they broke on the ship; the whole
universe of water was a-glitter and a-glance.

AND
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The infinite variety in monotony and monotony
of variety that the sea holds are surprising. The
changeable colours of the sea are a bewildering
study in blues and greens, more especially blues.
You might paint the sea from a peacock's tail.
Sapphire, chrysoprase, lapis-lazuli, turquoise,
amethyst, emerald, jade, violet, purple—all these
shades will you find in the sea, and not one
definable. The great charm of the sea colours is
that they are infinitely suggestive, each shade
melts into some other shade, trembles between
two definite shades—never quite lends itself to
the blunt indiscretion of a name. The sea colours
are as nervously and perfectly and bewilderingly
interwrought with one another as the *leit-motifs*
in "Tristan." Yet the real sea-blue is a colour
apart; we find but one parallel to its intensity,

PENINSULAR its brilliance and its unfathomable depth,—what

AND “Tristan” is to Music the Sea-blue is to Blue in
ORIENTAL general.

(January 1898)

Yet the sea is by no means always blue, even in the tropics. Sometimes it is like a piece of undulating grey oilcloth stretched to the horizon ; sometimes it is of a translucent, sparkling blue-green, the two colours perfectly blent as notes in a chord (a nice chord) ; at night it's a world of shining darkness faintly a-gleam, round the ship, with phosphorescent foam ; when the moon shines on it, it is a rippling silver mirror, while sunshine turns it to golden hair beautifully waved.

I will spare you the amber, crimson, and purple sunset effects on the sea.

This beautiful blank water is broken by two incidents—a tiny silver fleet of flying-fish, dainty amphibious butterflies that spangle the little blue waves and the foam flowers ; and dolphins, those Pierrots of the sea—luscious of line as if they had been designed by Aubrey Beardsley, tumbling with weird playfulness in the big green waves.

But in the Indian Ocean, as I tell you, we saw nothing at all but the sea. What a joy it was to get into Bombay harbour ! ringed with blue hills, studded with green isles — one of the loveliest

harbours in the world ; those of Rio Janeiro and PENINSULAR
Sydney are its rivals for the golden apple, I believe. And what a time they took to land us !

AND
ORIENTAL
(January
1898)

Impatience dies on board ship, if you give it time enough ; here all is leisurely, "sleepy, flat-footed, and artful"—like the married man.

P.S.—I feel that a paper headed "Peninsular and Oriental" would be incomplete without an appreciation of the "Peninsular Express" which runs between London and Brindisi. This a marvellously fast train,—but speed is not everything !

At first sight, the Peninsular Express is quite inoffensive ; it is even attractive. At Calais, from whence it makes its real start, one is drawn to it—as the fly is drawn to the paper—by its surface glitter, its marble washstands, its magnificent prodigality of towels, its corridors, its urbane brown-coated officials. One starts, as I said, from Calais, like the "Hoffis Kat" of *Sporting Times* celebrity, full of "'igh and 'oly 'opes." During the first night's journey these hopes gradually fade into a mournful resignation. On the first day one discovers that none of the windows will open without a surgical operation, that the

PENINSULAR cars continue to shake like an aspen leaf, that
AND death is the supreme good and brandy its under-
ORIENTAL study. On the second night, one is reduced to
(January that pleasing state of coma which is the result of
1898) severe suffering; and when one becomes dimly
conscious that all the gas on the car has gone out,
one has no more spirit in him than the Queen of
Sheba. On the second day one lies in his berth
and groans from Ancona to Brindisi, till at the
latter charming port he is so glad to arrive that
he is suddenly restored to sufficient life and energy
to resist the picturesque Italian blackguards who
are clamouring to carry his baggage on board
“*Oceana* ship.” A most desirable ship she is,
though rather too fond of washing her decks.
Beautifully steady is the *Oceana*; for a rolling
ship gathers no passengers—of my sort.

P.P.S.—Five months later. Homeward bound
(as far as Bologna). The Brindisi Express is one
of the best trains in the world. .

BOMBAY

PERSONS of no importance, when writing of India from the picturesque point of view, invariably select historical landmarks or popular bores for transcribing into words. They neglect the exquisite, every-day local colour. The Victoria Station at Bombay is to them more than the radiant red of a coolie's turban or the iridescent sheen of a blue-black crow. Coolies and crows, I am led to believe, pall after many years of active association with either, but, just at first, they are very, very attractive. Both are so inordinately decorative: the crows strike the desirable dark note in the brilliant Eastern symphony of sunshine and colour; the coolies are so artistic and original of taste that when they dress at all—a somewhat infrequent occurrence—they invariably dress differently, and these various tones and shades of dress make a bewildering music of colour. As I watch a gay native crowd squatting in the sun-flecked shade of the banyan trees in front of Watson's Hotel, I see most impossible combinations of the rainbow looking beautiful. Each discord has a Wagnerian sweetness, comparable to the matchless discords in the Prelude of "Tristan." I see pink, magenta, scarlet, crimson, and orange turbans; blue, green,

BOMBAY and once-white turbans; sympathetic chocolate skins; brilliant rags of intermittent clothing; dingy rags of apologetic clothing; women clasped from head to knee in lovely gaudy hues — emerald, amber, crimson; and a nautch-girl mildly attitudinising before the public verandah in scarlet and saffron, as befits her calling. On the road, vague little bullock-carts are straying to and fro; gharris, with neat horses that show their Arab breed in their hanging heads and arching tails, are waiting for hire; snake-charmers are droning on weird little pipes and holding up writhing handfuls of horrible little serpents, shouting meanwhile for backsheesh.

It is Sunday afternoon—though you mightn't think it,—and across the road in the bright green sunlit garden, where the palms and the poinsettias flourish, a congregation of crows is holding a service. A little breeze, which has somehow lost its way from the sea, is wandering deliciously among the banyan branches—just on a level with my balcony, and the sun shines like burning brass in a cloudless sky. It is too hot to extemporise, one can but record impressions; a sentiment of siesta creeps over the universe, the crows, and the bheestie with his shining goat-skin of water on

his shining mahogany shoulder, alone are responsible and vitalised. Here one can but lounge luxuriously and absorb the shifting waves of local colour together with the aboriginal "peg" and many back numbers of London Illustrated Papers.

"India," said a young Anglo-Indian to me, "consists chiefly of back numbers."

Now the roof and crown of Bombay is its native Bazar. I turned suddenly out of the grand European quarter, which is something like the "Ring" in Vienna, and beheld—Asia "in a maze of double-coloured gems, changing as she moved like the waves of the sea."

The Bazar is so bewildering, intoxicating, and Oriental, that, as you are whirled in your "gharri" through that mad symphony of colour, you can hardly distinguish between houses and men; the men twinkle and the houses glow—that is all the difference. And the houses are the larger, softer tracts of colour—the orchestration; while the men seem the mordant melody, in notes of biting brilliancy—orange, rose, scarlet, violet, magenta; the gay turbans are like wind-tossed flower heads, as they move on their human stalks, supple and slender, in the gigantic hotbed of the Bazar, which

BOMBAY produces impartially the Plague and a perfect
(January) ocular Paradise.

Who could describe the wonderful architecture in the Bazar? The myriad, strange, painted houses that lean dreamily to each other across the roadway, each one a unique personality; houses with gay façades that years of sun and rain have softened to softest rainbow tints, here and there in just sufficiently bad taste to be piquant. For these houses are as wilfully and æsthetically original as their owners; they differ in height, shape, style, and colour, though they all belong indisputably to the same "jat"—to borrow an Orientalism; they are quaintly carved, too, and their windows are of stained glass of a soul-satisfying cheapness, which they carry off magnificently, as the majestic beggar bears his ragged, imposing turban. Indeed, the Bazar is an extraordinary mixture of squalor and splendour.

Picture the scene! Those delectable dwellings with the overhanging storeys and gay wooden galleries and balconies, carved and fretted into grotesque shapes, and adorned with strange wooden sculptures of gods and elephants and flowers painted by some decadent, colour-blind artist, gone mad—seemingly. Pink and green

and yellow and deep-sea blue, saffron and crimson—all melting cunningly, the one into the other, on a basis of rich, dark, amber wood. Overhead, the blue brilliant Indian sky; below, a motley medley of bullock-carts, tinselled ekkas drawn by diminutive tats; pariah-dogs, eager brown men, impassive brown men; women in gaudy saris, with silver anklets clinking lazily on their dusky limbs, silver studs in their noses, and lustrous soulless kohl-ringed eyes; pretty little brown children with tangled elf-locks; beggars, bheesties, and occasional goats.

And what can you buy in the Bazar? Heaven and Earth. All things from the patent-leather slippers of the baboo to wonderful native embroideries and sweetmeats of an impassioned stickiness. Make your sentimental excursion through the Bazar at sunset; for the poetic softness of an Indian dusk accentuates the vivid tints of men and houses, touching all things with a weird glamour, and the roselight in the west conduces to rose-coloured spiritual spectacles. At such a time the Bazar is rather an experience than a panorama; its splendour is too splendidly incoherent for the mind to take in through the eyes, it is rather an intoxication of the sense of

BOMBAY sight. It has the fluidity and the intense life
(January) of music; it is like the prismatic "Preislied" in the "Meistersinger" heard for the first time; it suggests Wagner's most intensely sensuous tone-colouring, and it has that dramatic heightening and intensifying of light and shade which, transcending the Real, verges on the Impossible and the Dream,—with perhaps just a touch of the Drury Lane Pantomime. This is the Apotheosis of The East, the meaning of the words Peninsular and Oriental.

Drive through the Bazar at night! It is like a soft engraving of a brilliant picture; the moonlight (you must bring a moon with you) invests it with a pensive romance, a dreamy pallor steals over it, and it gains that subtle touch of mystery which it lacked in the glare of day; it is weird as some strange city of the Under-world. Here is "Asia, Mother of Dreams and Mysteries."

If it be the marriage month, suddenly the silence of the silver darkness will be broken by an advancing wedding procession with flaming torches and discordant music of tom-toms and unholy wind instruments. In the midst of the gay throng comes the bridegroom, poor little

chap! dressed gorgeously in cloth of gold and jewels that wink in the torchlight. He looks preternaturally solemn, with his great soft kohl-darkened eyes, as he sits his bravely caparisoned steed. The bride is, of course, invisible. The cavalcade disappears quickly, as a fantastic nightmare with the return of consciousness.

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(January)

I visited the Bazar first at sunset, then at night, and I went again next morning. As my gharri tossed the fascinating, surging waves of that shifting colour sea to either side, jolting the meek-eyed little bullocks in their bedizened ekkas, it suddenly struck me that an ox-gharri was a bullock - cart — not a symbol. Early morning is a peculiarly disenchanting and disenchanted time, whatever poets may say.

The value of first impressions of India can hardly be overestimated. I can quite understand that The More you see of India, The Less you like It :—perhaps I should say, The Less you see of India, The More you like It. Its childish surface-splendour—I speak not of its Antiques, but of its casual characteristic features—dazzles at first, but quickly palls; and its sunshine has not the seduction of occasional cloud; it is all high lights and no relief. But one can rarely

BOMBAY (January) weary of its palms and its casuarinas, its banyans and its bamboos and its plantains, its holy pipals, its bougainvillæas and—its gold-mohurs.

The casual tourist, of course, gets infinitely more pleasure out of India than the jaded resident, though the latter suffers less from mosquitoes and merchants. I have often watched the tired smile of the resident while his bird-of-passage friend rhapsodises on the Bazar and admires the intelligence of the coolie. Yet in India the æsthetic sense need never die while the gentle stimuli of the coolie's turban and the palm-grove remain. The Anglo-Indian grows disproportionately indifferent to picturesque casual sights, and he sees only the dark side of the Indian sun. To him the whisky-peg and the long-chair are more than the inner life of the East, and to him Aryan is a synonym for Nasty!

In the blissful if boring interval between tiffin and drive this afternoon, I have been studying the ubiquitous crow in the banyan tree. I have decided that he is of an invisible steel-blue with a grey cowl and a general iridescence. But, like a Bayreuth singer's, his voice is more important than his appearance, for he caws all day, he

caws nearly all night, and most he caws in BOMBAY
the early morning. In point of fact, the (January)
jackal is his under-study, for the jackal fills his
rare nocturnal intervals of silence with match-
less sound. The crow is something of a per-
sonality in India; he ranges from Peshawur to
Colombo, and he behaves as if the whole place
belonged to him. He never has anything new
to say, and he says it incessantly, like an
evangelical parson. He is strangely bold, and
possessed of a latter-day egotism which would
hardly discredit a minor poet or a popular
pianist. You know that egotist who looks upon
the round world as "un point sur un 'i,'" to
quote the quaint moon of Alfred de Musset.

Yet for all these things the crow obtains
pardon, by reason of his singular appropriateness;
he goes so well in the landscape, he is
the roof and crown of local colour, spicy and
bizarre, and his black unique ego on the sapphire
sky is the apotheosis of the Silhouette.

The snake-charmer is another personality who
interests me much. What a weird profession!
To make the hooded cobra dance to a little
droning pipe and a monotonously undulating
tune. To grasp three writhing snakes in either

BOMBAY hand and wreath a python superbly round one's
(January) neck, regardless of constriction. What a weird profession ! I would almost as soon be a critic.

At last, sunset comes round again. Oriental life is strangely peaceful at sunset. Then even the crows cease from troubling, and the bheestie is at rest. A light wind springs up from the sea—not enough to take your hair out of curl, if you are a minor poet,—a soothing, sympathetic breeze. And then you drive round by Malabar Hill, a soft wonder of palms, lovely and unrestrained as Bacchantes, and setting sun and luxuriant trees, with gorgeous, indolent, tropic plants, lining each side of that delightful road which, winding lazily upward, at length commands a magnificent view of the blue horse-shoe bay and the great city of Bombay—much larger than you thought—stretching for miles far below, rose-coloured and dream-like in the red dusk.

The sunsets in Bombay are wonderful, almost as grand and wonderful as the mosquitoes. Bombay is famed for atmospheric effects, strange and beautiful as those in the "Rheingold." Here, on Malabar Point, the air turns to quivering gold and the west to enchanted blood ;—the

little bullocks trotting unconcernedly downhill in their gay, jingling ekkas seem profane and sacrilegious; howbeit the chocolate sheen of their drivers, tones sympathetically in the vivid colour scheme.

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And then you drive on and listen to the frou-frou of the night wind in the plaintain fronds, and admire the stars and the bright amber moon, rising like an orange or Aphrodite from the sea, throwing a dancing golden bar across the dark water.

And then you confirm the accuracy of Shelley's " Indian Serenade"—

"In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are shining bright";

since, in India, a breeze always springs up at sunset, and the stars shine brightest when they first come out; later, their brilliancy pales in the sky of dusky amethyst.

Of course I visited the Towers of Silence which crest Malabar Hill. The vultures were sitting on each round, squat white tower in demure, expectant rows, like girls at a dance. They are so naïvely interested in visitors; they always hope that there is some remote chance

BOMBAY of your dying on the premises. They regard
(January) you with the savage wistfulness of a scraggy,
décolletée dowager, sighing after a mild musical
lion for her next At Home. Now and then a
huge, evil bird will flap, sullenly as a pestilence,
from one tower to the other. I liked the
vultures, they had such a dissipated appear-
ance.

The garden of the Towers is beautiful, full
of flowers and rare plants and palms. My
Parsee guide presented me with a sweet
champak flower (which hitherto I had discovered
only in Shelley) as a buttonhole. It seemed to
breathe the spirit of Bombay, overpoweringly
sweet, exotic, and enervating.

Bombay is inexhaustible for sights. And
whether you want to or not, you must steam
across the divine harbour to Elephanta Isle, to
see the old, sculptured gods in their antique
caves. You fly through a labyrinth of shipping
—English men-of-war, merchantmen, P. & O.'s,
picturesque native craft from Madras—much like
the boats you see off the coast of Italy on blue
Mediterranean days, and slim Bombay boats with
those strange, graceful sails, that suggest a sea-
gull's wings. The wide stretch of water is all

a-glitter in the sun, the tug dances up and down
on a see-saw of spraying wave, and everything
looks depressingly alive and busy and cheerful.
You land at Elephanta Isle on slippery stones,
and follow a hot path up to the caves in the
crest of the hill. Here you see Brahma, Shiva,
and Vishnu, cut out of the nice, cool, solid rock.
But whether or no they are worth the trouble of
the excursion is a moot point,—at all events the
harbour is !

BOMBAY
(January)

I was fresh from England, and not yet *blasé*,
so I gazed much. I went to see the Pottery and
the Market, and recked not of the Plague; I also
went to see the Arab Market, where they sell the
real Arab horses, brought across the Arabian Sea
by Arab merchants. Splendid creatures they
were, mostly ponies; faultlessly made, many of
them, with sloping shoulders that set one dream-
ing of their poetry of motion, wide chests, flat
knees, arching necks and tails, and little blood
heads with intellectual foreheads and eyes prettier
than any woman's. Chestnut and flea-bitten grey
are the Arab colours, an iridescent, prismatic
chestnut and a silvery starry grey. These are the
polo ponies, on whom the souls of the blest play
in the Elysian Fields. Yet I have known them

BOMBAY played outside Paradise, and they are often lazy
(January) little beggars, sweet-tempered, and sensibly bored
by having to follow a polo ball. I tasted the
luxury of an Arab hack in India, and I have
cursed my bicycle ever since.

In the Arab Market one also sees "Persian
pussy-cats brought for sale"; the merchants are
strangely loth to part with these soft balls of
white and blue-grey fluff, which are an idyllic
mystery of silken fur and claws, with amber or
emerald eyes;—the grace of a Persian kitten
passes words! Oh! soft fur and scratches!

I think Bombay is one of the most charming
places in the world; it is a kind of Mahomet's
Paradise, with perhaps the most important item
left out—at least, I didn't meet any! 'Twas
in Bombay I learned to admire the natives.
They are, in truth, a superbly decorative race;
they pose as if they were living pictures, and
their pose is always admirable though sometimes
startling. Here, in Bombay, Man drops into his
rightful position as a mere obbligato to Nature
and to Art.

. . THE
ECLIPSE

WHAT I chiefly admired about the great THE ECLIPSE
Eclipse of the Sun was my lunch. (*Jan. 22,
1898*)

Indeed, it was by far the most exciting feature of the phenomenon; the sun, to tell you the truth, disappointed me. The local newspaper men, having wisely written their accounts of the event before it came off, had aroused my expectations of sights and wonders, and I was prepared for a regular Walpurgisnacht. I understood that I ran every chance of going totally blind, that earth and sky were to be suffused with a ghastly, pallid dusk, that the Aurora Borealis and the Southern Cross were to mingle their fires round the eclipsed sun, that the birds were to go to roost on the telegraph wires, and that there was to be a grand display of fireworks.

Naturally these lurid imaginings of perfervid journalists awoke my spirit of curiosity (but a feeble thing at the best of times), and inveigled me into a railway journey, of some six hours, to the magic tract of country whence the total eclipse could be seen.

I provided myself with much cheap green glass from the Bazar, and spent several boxes of matches and some twenty-four hours in smok-

THE ECLIPSE ing the same. Early on the morning of the
(Jan. 22, 1898) 22nd I started.

At length I arrived at a little up-country railway station, and I jumped out on to the platform in the slowly fading daylight. I confronted a huge concourse of natives, all assembled to witness the eclipse, but I noticed that they watched me all the time instead of the sun. And I'm not much to look at! I fidgeted up and down the platform; I cursed the Khansamah in the Refreshment Room; I drank a peg or two, and the eclipse seemed to hang fire mightily. At last it really grew dusk, birds twittered uneasily, a few natives fell on their faces—awaiting instant death; the black disc of the moon (it was the moon, I think?) entirely obscured the sun, and one big star came out beside the blown-out lamp of the world. This star shone for two minutes' space, then the burning rim of the sun crept out again and killed all lesser light.

That was all! My eyes were as sound as ever, I was in a thoroughly bad temper, and I had cut my fingers with green glass. I retired sulkily to my comfortable railway carriage, and began to study my fellow-passengers, Anglo-

Indians all. And, in this unamiable frame of THE ECLIPSE
mind I thought a sketch of the Anglo-Indian. (Jan. 22,
1898)

The train drowsed languidly back to the place whence it had started that morning; like a sleepy snake, or rather a somnolent caterpillar, it crawled past rice-fields and palm-trees and native huts. I looked round on my fellow-passengers, and thought:—Anglo-Indians are too palpably men and women. They lack those delicate nuances of sex which distinguish the minor poet and the gentlemanly woman. Like the primary colours, they weary the senses. They are far too definitely sexed to be ever very attractive. For men and women are, without doubt, the most wearying things in the world. Sex is a thing to be hinted, not to be declared; indeed, a slight ambiguity of sex is desirable,—this, I grant you, is discernible almost exclusively among the artists.

The Anglo-Indians are deplorably inartistic; many of them are good, simple, cheerful souls, too piquantly childlike to be altogether boring; many of them are dreary pessimists, absorbed in whisky and mental apathy. Of the two brands, I think I prefer the lighter one. After all, Polo is a more passionate, vital delight than the “*Fin-de-Siècle*,” and how much more dangerous!

THE ECLIPSE But, as a subject of conversation, polo palls.

(Jan. 22,
1898) I love the horse, as all right-minded persons must

do,—the horse is so entirely lovable, and so unexpected,—but I don't care to talk about him all day and all night.

The horse is the Anglo-Indian's sole joy—a very superior joy, too! The horse is a creature fascinating as Wagner; if you begin by liking you end by adoring the horse. Not merely for his satin coat or his nervous gentlemanly soul, not merely for his inspiriting paces or his sweet unreasonableness, but for his charming personality. How I enjoyed riding him across country in arid India! I went jackal-hunting and pig-sticking, and all the rest of it. I took good care not to enter into hostile relations with any boars over four feet high; indeed, I turned my spear and my attention to infant pigs, so I escaped without loss of limb. Jackal-hunting is mere child's play. You sit on your horse, and your horse carries you bravely over yawning chasms at least two feet wide, and mud walls quite twelve inches high. You taste the fierce delights of the chase at small expenditure of limb or life. Indeed, pig-sticking itself is safe compared with riding a bicycle in Hyde Park at the height of the season.

AGRA

AGRA FORT is a golden book bound in a copper cover. Who would dream of the inward splendours of white marble and mosaic and gold when he sees the red sandstone ramparts of Agra Fort, with its quaint, childish architecture, which recalls the frowning gingerbread towers of our youth?

AGRA
(March)

I didn't think much of Agra Fort till I got inside it. And then the dazzling whiteness of the Moti Musjid, the Pearl Mosque, with its beautiful, severe profile, clear-cut on the "signal sapphire" of the March sky, struck dead all thoughts of gingerbread and Noah's Ark.

The priceless simplicity of the Moti Musjid arrests the eye inured to gaudy Hindu colours,—white marble all, veined delicately with black; the many regular-featured little cupolas are several separate pearls. Here in the Moti Musjid each perfect pillar has its fellow, each its carven lotus design; the shining marble floor is perfectly portioned out as regards praying space; every man has his own cool, little polished prayer, daintily defined for him by a dividing thread of black marble. The floor is a perpetual seraphic prayer, kept bright by the knees and foreheads of the Faithful. The Moti Musjid is

AGRA
(*March*) a pearl of Devotion, a stainless shrine. I felt positively profane as I skipped from cupola to cupola across its serene roof, under the dazzling sky, to see the fine view of Agra town and the Jumna therefrom.

What a strange casket of treasures is the huge fort of Akbar! It is one and a half miles round, they say, and it holds a succession of exquisite marble chambers and courts, with marvellous walls inlaid with gold and lapis-lazuli and brown and violet marbles, faded and defaced by Time and War, but here and there intact—giving proof of the wonderful beauty of the palace in the days of Shah Jehan, who supplied all its jewels to the casket. He it was who built all the white marble chambers and courts, the greater part of the palace; Akbar and Jehangir being responsible for the red and white sandstone—notably for the fort itself, which holds the fairy palace.

Charming is the walled garden of the Queen, a little scented wilderness of jasmine and lemon trees and purple bougainvillæa, with white shining paths and a carved fountain.

The Zenana was much considered by Shah Jehan; though somewhat fenced in by those wonderful, fretted marble lattices, it had a

delicious dwelling, without a doubt. I was much amused by the room they call the library of the Zenana,—a little chamber with niches of different and curious shapes piled high up to the ceiling all round the walls. What a honeyed circulating library of Persian poets they must have had, what a surfeit of golden girls! One can picture the beautiful electric lights of the Harem, with their great kohl-darkened eyes and their rose-leaf hands, living in a perpetual Doll's house, and recking not of Ibsen,—splashing in their marble tanks, playing Blindman's Buff behind the flower-like lattice, and otherwise illumining the illustrious house of Shah Jehan.

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A wonderful place is Agra Fort! You may wander for hours about its deserted courts and corridors, where the red sandstone is crumbling peacefully ; you may run up and down myriad tortuous little stairways ; you may rest in the marble chambers overlooking the river (if the man who sells photos will let you), and watch the little green parrots, like emeralds, flitting on the red sandstone ramparts of the protecting fort far below ; and there your thoughts drift back to the time when the palace was peopled, and all the glories of rainbow Eastern embroideries and

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cushions softened and enhanced the beauty of white marble tracery and embossed pillar. How sweetly the air comes through the wrought lattice, a delicate veil to temper the gold sunshine and the bright blue day—here in the chamber of the Queen.

Just as the dead rose-water fountain springs again, and the wind of two centuries ago stirs the purdah's silken fringe to the soft pattering of slipperless feet, the rustling of embroidery stiff with gold—behold! a native is providentially at your elbow, offering “One photo for two annas each.”

You can never browse sentimentally on the Past in India; you are not allowed to dream in these old cities; you spend your time in warding off the beggar and the vendor of objects of no interest whatever.

The massive sweep of Akbar's red fort, with its crowning, frowning tower, is a splendid sight. Yet who would dream of the palace within, the white romantic courts of Shah Jehan?

Shah Jehan had a very pretty taste in white marble. And the tomb of his prime minister, Itimad-ud-Dowlah (a man with a difficult name), across the river, is a masterpiece in its way. It

is of white marble, inlaid with coloured marbles and jade and agate in fantastically varied designs. Each of its white walls is pierced by a trellised marble screen, of the delicacy of leaf shadows on grass. It combines the best features of the Mahometan and Hindu styles of architecture, since it has the symmetry and artistic completeness of the Saracenic with the imagination and variety of the Hindu. Most beautiful are its inlaid floors ; indeed, from cupola to platform it is a wonder of mosaic. Never before have I seen a building mosaiced over the whole of its surface. And the workmanship is so exquisite ! How is it that the Orientals, left to themselves, are so infinitely artistic ? Whence do we get all our modern friezes and dados and designs for house decoration, if not from these old palaces and tombs of the Mogul emperors ?

I cannot stand more than two marble buildings in a morning, and, on paper, marble tombs pall with a surprising celerity ; so, by your leave, I will tell you a little about carpets and curtains.

I visited the carpet manufactory at Agra, and saw how they weave those soul-satisfying Eastern carpets which ravish the hearts of our minor poets. I saw the carpet stretched on the loom,

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and the many-coloured strands being swiftly and deftly inwrought by small boys—dainty little devils, with large black eyes and brilliant teeth. All the “hands” are boys. “Agra’s silken loom” is famous for carpets, and very beautiful these are,—with such strange combinations of colour! Truly the native colours, as Gautier’s written phrases, “fall on their feet like cats.” The artists’ instinct is surely in their subconsciousness, for they blend unheard-of shades with a careless, unerring hand, and the effect of the whole is perfect. Howbeit, their colours are mostly soft.

In Agra Bazar there is a very seductive and splendid embroidery shop, with an insinuating native owner, who shows you honeyed shawls and satins and embroideries with honeyed words, at vinegar prices. These embroideries are as delicately wrought as pictures, in brilliant silk and gold thread; their naïve representations of peacocks and butterflies are curiously quaint and attractive. I long to possess a silken peacock by an Agra craftsman; it should breathe the spirit of the East from my dull Western wall.

This same insinuating native showed me native jewellery—enormous rough-cut precious stones, pearls and rubies and sapphires, gold-inlaid boxes,

and emeralds eclipsing those of Amsterdam,—all the trinkets with which the dancing girls of Akbar might have decked themselves. And in this room, which was a casket of untold treasures and splendours, there hung cheap lithographs of the Queen and Lord Salisbury and the Derby Winner, wall decorations all. Truly, the Oriental is a queer cuss !

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(March)

I went to see the marble-work in the making, the inlaid things and the carven screens. I bought an inlaid bowl, and, seeing a slight flaw in the marble, I confronted the aged heathen who was endeavouring to cheat me with the same. Said he, "God put it there, and it cannot be altered." That argument was unanswerable, and I took the bowl. I should have bought a small and acutely faithful model in alabaster of the Taj, but I bethought me that such a thing your landlady's seafaring son brings home to be stuck under a glass case in the unused parlour beside the dyed seaweed and the waxen flowers, and I refrained.

There is, indeed, much to be seen at Agra. You may poke about marble tombs all day, if you like. And you are bound to drive out to Secundra and Futtehpore Sikri.

At Secundra is the tomb of the mighty Akbar, and I don't think the old lion is adequately caged. His tomb is a fantastic, incoherent, and somewhat disappointing thing ; it is almost grotesque in design, suggesting a Chinese pagoda by its tiers of red stone pillared platforms, topped by a white marble roofless shrine, of which the chief beauty is the fretted marble screen that walls it,—the four walls are all of white lacelike lattice work. The tomb is exquisitely set in a luxurious garden, but one feels that it is hardly worthy of Akbar.

Futtehpore Sikri is the old town of Akbar, built all of that red sandstone which Akbar seems to have specially affected. Beautiful it looks, fantastically carved as it is, defined on an Indian sky of intense soft blue. This town is twenty-three miles from Agra, by a potential bicycle road, bordered on either side by an almost unbroken chain of trees, planted centuries ago by the thoughtful Akbar for the benefit of us tourist-log.

You must drive to Futtehpore Sikri ; there is no rail in that direction. It is a pleasant drive, with soothing, monotonous scenery—flat, cultivated, and green. I was much struck by the

number of strange birds in the landscape,—storks pensively lounging in silver shallows filled by last night's thunderstorm; vultures, eagles, and various hawks flying about; soft little grey doves, with their voice of delicious timbre; gold and black, beautiful mango-birds; brilliant blue jays, and emerald-green parrots, with Oriental tact, inlaying themselves among the red sandstone boulders of Futtehpore Sikri's ruined battlements. On the road one meets strings of camels, laden with bales, perchance coming down from the Khyber; ponderous, picturesque carts drawn by buffaloes (five in hand), obstinate, slate-coloured brutes with hard long horns and soft long eyes; gay little ekkas with smart ponies much overweighted. Here, in a pink and silver conveyance, like a sugar plum, you may see a man taking all his wives out for a drive—four, as becomes a follower of the Prophet. Out of deference to the pink and silver, this artistic Mussulman wears the brilliant, beautiful green turban which only those who have made a pilgrimage to Mecca may wear. Why should not we Wagnerians who have been to Bayreuth have a similar badge of distinction?

As you pass through the teeming native villages, overrun with pretty black children and pariah-

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dogs and beggars, everywhere you see the ubiquitous crow, goat, and bullock ; goats sprinkled with discretion throughout the landscape, bullocks finely massed in herds. Wonderfully hideous are the pigs of the North-West Provinces ! I defy even Richard Le Gallienne to make anything more poetic than a sausage out of them !—such hideous beasts, veritable *bêtes-noires*. In striking contrast to these cheerful mud villages are the mournful, deserted palaces of the magnificent Akbar in the ruined city.

The great red palace is in wonderful preservation ; carvings and paintings are hardly defaced. My guide piloted me through a labyrinth of courts and temples, most noteworthy of which was a series of temples in line, of alternate Hindu and Persian architecture. It is interesting to compare those two styles—the gracious severity of the arched, domed Persian with the restless variety of the bizarre Hindu. Each has the defects of its qualities, but undoubtedly the Persian is the more beautiful style, and also the more monotonous,—which is not at all a contradiction in terms.

The chief beauty of this palace is the tomb of Akbar's Prime Minister. This is a little

mosque, composed almost entirely of white marble latticed screens, more intricate, delicate, and lovely than those of the Taj. For these screens are pleasingly varied in design. Being of Hindu workmanship, they escape the terrible formality which is the pitfall of the lordly Persian art. All four sides of the mosque are wrought entirely of this lacelike marble, and the tomb itself is canopied with mother-o'-pearl and doored with ebony; the floors are of wondrous inlaid coloured marbles, and the walls are painted with flowers. The little mosque gleams out as a pearl of rare price in the palace of red stone. The combination of red stone with white marble, which one sees so much at Agra, is a very effective one.

At last I grew a-weary of ivory palaces, and hied me over to the Dâk bungalow, where I had lunched, and sought the society of the pariah-dog who cleans the plates.

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(March)

. . . THE TAJ MAHAL
(AN ACQUIRED TASTE)

O TAJ!

THE TAJ MAHAL

"The Janitor of Paradise shall see his face in thy (An Acquired Taste) chamber-floor.

The dust of thy courts is collyrium for the eyes of the heavenly Hoor."

When asked his opinion of the Taj, my uncle said it was a very nice place. This is perhaps the most original definition of the Taj ever given. "You see it with the heart, before the eyes have time to gaze."

I am not sure my uncle was wrong. All Mahometan architecture lacks passion to a certain extent. It has such a tendency to reiterate. With it indeed a "Thing of beauty is a joy for ever," and it never wearies of reproducing that beautiful thing.

When I pause in admiration before some lovely minaret, in some lovely marble epic, I know too well that when I turn round I shall confront another minaret, differing in no infinitesimal particular from its fellow. This depresses me. I don't like to take my beauties for granted.

And in this ungracious way I ventured to criticise the Taj.

Its peerless symmetry, its perfection of colour, and its seraphic regularity of feature struck on

THE TAJ
MAHAL
(An Acquired Taste) me a little coldly. Yet the Taj is passionate in spite of itself; the spirit of "Tristan" animates it, although its four minarets do match. I think it lacks pathos somewhat; it is too magnificent to be pathetic, it is too serenely splendid to be touching. But how beautiful! with a strong beauty both of the senses and of the spirit—those polished, perfect marble contours, "too wan for blushing and too warm for white"; the marvellous mosaic of its walls, lapis-lazuli, agate, jade, and jasper, cornelian and all the rare stones, miscalled gems; its fretted marble screens, intricate and delicate as hoarfrost tracery, and yet two inches thick,—these screens which temper the light round Arjamand's tomb.

Exquisite, lovely, and marvellously wrought are the embossed flowers on its inner walls—lotus, iris, passion-flower.

Perfect in design and faultless in workmanship is the Taj.

And yet, I think, if the ghost of Arjamand steals out to walk at night in the moonlit garden, she must rejoice to be again in a mutable, whispering world, where the wind changes its fluttering design of light and shadow with every breath, and each tree has a unique person-

ality, and wayward life is better than faultless death.

THE TAJ
MAHAL
(An Acquired Taste)

"Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass, stains the white radiance of Eternity"—that sprang to my mind as I profaned the white steps of the Taj with tourist feet. I had seen so many photographs of the Taj, and I had read and written so many descriptions of the Taj, that when I saw it for the first time it had a certain cold familiarity for me, though it was more beautiful and less lovely than I had supposed. I cannot conceive of anything more beautiful than that splendour of white marble, with its infinitely slight and delicate arabesques of black marble veins. It lives clear-cut in my memory, with the soft curves of its great shining dome, and its arrowy minarets,—a pearl of softest brilliance, accentuated by the blue sky and the red sandstone towers which rise on either side of it at a reverent distance.

Beautiful it looks from the entrance gate of its garden, framed in a red stone arch, seen down a vista of trees and marble tanks bordered with flowers and slim, dark cypresses. The cool silver water, stretching to its very steps, gives life and mobility to the picture. This Taj garden is

THE TAJ divine, so luxurious and well grown, with velvet
MAHAL lawns and splendid leafy trees and endless flowers,
(An Acquired mostly roses, by the bulbul's special request. The
Taste) variety of the garden is a relief after the exquisite
limitation of the Taj Mahal.

Yet, after all, Shah Jehan, when he built the Taj, was but following, with a marvellous instinct, the adage that limitation is the salt of Love; for the Taj is those words transcribed into marble. Truly, it is more passionate than any varied Hindu architecture could be. But this you must see with your soul, and not with your eyes. It has Wagnerian passion; the *leit-motifs* of its design are constantly recurring, persistently as the love and death motifs recur in "Tristan"; it has the Wagnerian passionate monotony of spirit—a seraphically *toujours perdrix* sentiment. The Taj could never have been erected in honour of Many; it might almost have been built by the artist in honour of himself, so intense it is. One feels in it a perfect concentration, an aloofness; and its white calm is really no deeper than the hush in the deeps of "Tristan."

So Shah Jehan was right when he built the Taj on that unique reiterated design, all of the four sides similar, North, South, East, and West,

proclaiming the inevitable truth that limitation is
the salt of Art, each of the four minarets at each
of the four corners echoing this. Inside the Taj,
the vaulted dome and the walls would reverberate
the words for ever, if you sang them, for they re-
echo even ordinary words in a marvellous way.
What a concert hall the Taj would make! And
what music you might have there,—concerts
strictly on the limitation principle. Only Jean de
Reszke and Paderewski should perform, and the
programme should be strictly limited to Wagner
and Chopin;—all musical amateurs excluded on
pain of death. But I think, in truth, the rever-
beration would be too strong for all save pianissimo,
and soon the audience would fly through the
sandal-wood doors to take refuge in the garden,
where Lusciola Philomela has the monopoly of
song.

I went to see the Taj by moonlight (oh! the
triteness of the phrase!)—a full moon. The
night was such a one as you might spend “with
Saadi in the garden,” breathless and tropical, the
flower scents rose as incense straight to Heaven,
the gleaming tanks were sheets of shadowy silver,
and musical with frogs. The Taj shone, peerless
as a swan on a lake, in the sky of dusky amethyst,

THE TAJ
MAHAL
(An Acquired
Taste)

THE TAJ a palace of pearl pierced by soft, unfathomable
MAHAL glooms. The white silence of the Taj seemed to
(An Acquired hush all Nature, to cast a spell on the breathless
Taste) air; it shone the eternal mystery of Beauty, incomprehensible as the Sphinx, inarticulate as Music; yet not like the music of Chopin and Tchaikovsky—music of twilight and pathos, it had no trace of sadness. I can but liken it to Wagner's "Tristan" (of course). It held the exquisite despair of the major key.

Now really the Taj has the fluidity of Music, it is dependent on light and darkness for its sentiment, as Tchaikovsky's Pathetic Symphony is dependent on its conductor for its pathos; the Taj is an exquisite musical instrument, upon which play sunset and dawn, moonlight and starlight; it has a different tone for each of those touches of day or night. And with the fluidity it has the impersonality of Music, wherefore it appeals to the gazer in a paradoxically personal way. You can identify yourself and your soul with the Taj as you can with the Prelude of "Tristan." When the Dorian sighs of the night winds whisper through the latticed ivory in the starlight, they do not breathe of Arjamand, but of your own dear self. What was Arjamand? A

perfect wife, a perfect mother, and a most infernal bore—very likely !

THE TAJ
MAHAL
(An Acquired Taste)

Yet you must conform your spirit to the Taj,—to that strange soul which one can scarce perceive at first, and fathom—never. The Taj is not to be lightly understood or appreciated. First impressions of things of worth are nearly always worthless. Shah Jehan, in expressing a personal emotion through the great medium of the Taj, has given us an impersonal symbol of Death and Love ; he wisely omitted Life,—and that is why at first sight we think the Taj is cold.

I went to see the Taj again by night ; there was a moon, a ghostly crescent moon, wrapped in a silvery haze. The Taj shone softly, a vision, a dream, the ghost of the World's Desire. An impalpable mist clung round it; it was pure emotion hardly materialised, a spirit symbol of all Beauty. Again it was music in marble, such music as Isolde's "Liebestod." Indeed, the Taj is a "Liebestod"—Shah Jehan's.

It was of the essence of that spiritual passion which is not wholly spiritual. What says the revised version of the Rubáiyát?—

" The Soul is but the senses catching fire,—
 Marvellous music of the body's lyre ;
The angel senses are the silver strings
 Stirred by the breath of some unknown desire."

THE TAJ I cannot express the Unreality, the Ideality, of
MAHAL the Taj that night. Standing but a few paces
(An Acquired from its ghostly loveliness, I felt that it was a
Taste) vision, impalpable, unattainable; I thought of
"Epipsychedion," I thought of Heine's "Ewig
verlor'nes Lieb," I thought of the whisky-peg I
should have when I got home,—for the night was
a cold one.

As I walked along the dim paths by the marble tank down the middle of the garden, the wind whispered in the deep-leaved trees, and stirred the shadowy water, and swayed the slim dusk cypresses;—I turned and looked on the Dream-wonder of the World rising ethereal as a temple not built with hands, passionate, pale, perfect, infinitely far, the ghost of my own Desire; . . . the Taj, strange and shadowy as the great wall of Himalaya glimpsed from the plains, after rain, at a hundred miles distance.

. . .
Shah Jehan had intended to throw a silver bridge across the river Jumna towards the Taj. I had hoped to throw a golden bridge of Silence over this turgid flood of Adjective—in the same direction. Alas!

DELHI



DELHI of the poets, the historians—one expects something of Delhi!

DELHI
(March)

This is a beautiful city of green luxuriant trees, and it is ringed by a red wall of the colour of Akbar's æsthetic sense. I dwelt in an hotel on the red wall of the city of the Moguls, the ancient capital of India, and I looked out on to a splendid desolate sweep of country (as I thought; it turned out to be a tame park, in point of fact), thickly wooded, from whence in the dim, mysterious nights the wail of the jackals came musically—cries of the ghosts of those who fell at the siege of Delhi.

What creatures lived in that savage jungle, that tame park? Tigers and leopards and pythons, I liked to think.

The well-grown trees of Delhi give its European Quarter (but a small one) an almost English look; it is a spirited, cheerful place with a singular lack of squalor. One falls in love with Delhi at first sight.

Now, doubtless you are sick of marble palaces, but I must tell you a little about Delhi Fort, of the inevitable red sandstone. For the white marble palace in Delhi Fort holds the far-famed Dewan-i-Khas, Hall of Audience,—a white marble,

DELHI
(*March*) pillared hall, gay with gold painted flowers of exquisite workmanship, and inlaid with beryl, jasper, and chalcedony, like the Gates of the Revelations. Its carved, curved columns and its fretted arches fringed with gold give the place a brilliant beauty, reviving the dead splendours of Shah Jehan. Alas! for the Peacock Throne, which blazed on yon marble slab that looks so uncommonly like a grand piano; the Peacock Throne of ruby, diamond, emerald, and glittering sapphire (which just suits my mock-jewelled style of diction) was carried off by the Shah of Persia more than a century ago, alas!

Beautiful are the marble inlaid baths of the Palace; most lovely that of the Zenana, with its legendary gold and silver work inlaid, to look like glittering scales of fish through the crystal running water. Beautiful also is the Pearl Mosque, small, delicate, and chaste, of white marble intersected by airy veins of black, on each pillar the lotus embossed. I had always deemed the lotus Buddha's flower, but I see it on every column of Mahomet.

From the Fort, ere yet I was a-weary of mosques, I drove to the great Jumma Musjid, the largest mosque in India,—a splendour of red stone and

marble, in design recalling the Taj, though less gracious of symmetry. Its colossal white dome, hugged by two smaller ones, its towering minarets, and the great red stone platform before it, centred by a tank of jade-green water for the purifying of the Faithful, make a sufficiently imposing picture. There in the Jumma Musjid was I shown relics of the Prophet. From a silver shrine, reverentially, by the hands of a holy man, came first one hair of Mahomet's beard, flaming red, a thread of fire; next came forth Mahomet's slipper, embalmed in jasmine flowers (he had large feet); next, the print of the Prophet's foot (it looked an uncommonly big one) in marble, lapped in rose leaves; and next—backsheesh to the holy man.

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I was so lucky as to see a great Mahometan Festival at the Jumma Musjid. Thousands of pilgrims in gorgeous colours thronged the mosque,—I watched them from the top of the Eastern Gate,—their effect was strange and splendid. They inlaid themselves in a kind of barbaric mosaic on the marble floor, so gay and close-packed were their turbans,—a mosaic of precious stones, you would have said, with a curious lack of design in the workmanship,—here a cluster of rubies, there an emerald, there a topaz; they

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might have been more artistically combined. As the multitude all bowed simultaneously, it was as if an east wind were passing over a gorgeous tropic flower-bed.

The Moulvie stood high in the central pulpit, like a scarecrow above luxuriant blossom, and the Faithful thronged round him in eddying mazes of colour,—such native colours! They have a certain shade which is not orange or amber or flame-colour or tawny, but seems to concentrate all the fire and beauty of four colours in one. Another attractive native shade is a certain violet, æsthetic green, before which emerald and parrot pale.

But the real place for studying these hues in their savage grace is the Chandni Chowk—irresistible as its name! This is the great street of Delhi Bazar, a bewilderingly fascinating place. The Chandni Chowk is wide and spacious; up its central thoroughfare runs a leafy avenue, on either side are its seductive native shops, splendid art-shops with never an English merchant to dim the glamour of Eastern bargains. Picturesque, past telling, is the Chandni Chowk, thronged with brilliant natives. How is it that no two natives dress alike? If you watch the changeful crowd

in the Chandni Chowk passing and repassing, you will see that each unit is a separate and unique personality, wearing his own original combination of orange and magenta, or green and violet, or emerald and crimson,—as the case may be. But in the Chandni Chowk you are like a fly in a web of hungry spiders, you are not left long to gaze. Soon are you engulfed up a narrow stairway into Ram Chand's front parlour, and there you are shown the wonderfulest things, ivory and sandal-wood and silver and ebony, all carved into miracles of art. Ivory elephants and palanquins and paper-cutters, ivory boxes ethereal as hoar-frost, ivory screens like wrought sea-foam, pictures painted on ivory, carved sandal-wood boxes sweeter than an English pine wood, silver quaintly wrought into grotesque gods and naïve animals,—so frankly impossible are they that their bizarre beauty is irresistible.

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Eventually, after much bad English and worse Hindustani, you buy some of these lovely things at a third of the price originally fixed—your cheerful merchant takes it all for granted,—and then you pass on to another shop, where they sell shawls and jewels and embroideries. Here you see marvellous and exquisite Oriental things

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thick-wrought with gold as the Prelude of "The Meistersingers," satins smooth as the coat of a thoroughbred Arab, combinations of colours daring and magnificent as Mr. Swinburne's alliteration, chuddahs costly and chaste as the diction of Walter Pater, embroideries delicate and rare as the cadenzas in Chopin's nocturnes, little table centres perfect as Heine's lyrics. I saw one (it might have been a Rossetti sonnet, so exotic and strangely exquisite it was) of yellow satin broidered—oh! so faultlessly!—with peacocks,—peacocks in iridescent blue, green, and gold thread.

What patient, passionate artists these Eastern embroiderers must be! Their works are poems and pictures and symphonies, they are not mere embroideries.

When you are a-weary of silk and gold, you pass on to the potter, and buy blue Delhi ware, of day-blue and night-blue mixed. Or perhaps you try a curio shop where you can buy anything,—Kashmir work of inlaid turquoise, bronze idols, sandal-wood tables, and, alas! ivory models of the Taj.

Delhi Bazar is a joy for ever; there is a great deal of it, and it teems with local colour. There

is a strange air of Romance about some of its narrow streets, an old-world dreaminess, which begins at the second storey and the overhanging balcony, and is somehow quite untouched by the busy hum of men below;—I cannot explain it!

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In the heart of the Bazar, down narrow, tortuous lanes, is the Jain Temple, of white marble and painted pillars and a very oddly shaped dome, which recalls a blanc-mange made by a 'prentice hand. The architecture of this temple seems a strange commingling of the Saracenic and the Hindu, while its covered chapel, wherein an idol reposes on a gilded throne, and its somewhat tarnished splendours of colouring, suggest a Roman Catholic church.

After a long sojourn in the sun-baked precincts of the Bazar, I drove gratefully out, through the Kashmir Gate of historic memory, to the Ridge. This is a long, low hill, about a mile and a half from the city wall. It commands an excellent view of Delhi, which looks like a sea of trees in the distance; the Bazar is all drowned in the green waves, only the cupolas and spires of mosques and temples rise like rocks above the leaf-line, and the great dome and minarets of the

DELHI
(March) Jumma Musjid tower like a triple lighthouse of fantastic design.

The Ridge is wild and rocky, and spoilt by an exceedingly ugly monument of unmistakably British make,—a memorial of those who fell during the Mutiny. I did not go and look at it; it offended me by its British baldness, when I was attuned to the symphonic architecture of the East,—to that immortal “*Symphonie en Blanc Majeur*” which men call the Taj.

Why is it that Europeans bring ugliness with them wherever they come? They are a blot on the City of the Moguls, with their squat, uncouth bungalows innocent of all architectural grace, and their grey uncultivated compounds, and their unspeakably hideous clothes with so little variety of colour and style. The Bazar is always pretty as a flower-garden; the English Quarter—Oh! Jehannum!

As it happens, the English Quarter at Delhi is rather better cultivated than the general run of English Quarters.

About eleven miles from Delhi is the famous Kutub Minar—one of the world’s wonders, I am told. I have an opinion of my own concerning the Seven Wonders of the World, and the

Kutub Minar has no place in My List. Here it is:—

The Taj Mahal.

Richard Wagner.

The Inferiority of Indian Hotels.

The Egotism of the Critic.

The Mosquito.

The Popularity of the Piano-Organist.

The Hair of Paderewski.

On the way to the Kutub Minar my guide insisted on showing me the tomb of Somebody Bahadur,—a very excellent tomb, I have no doubt, but I grow a-weary of tombs. I prefer to drive peacefully and see the country.

India is a dreary, dreamy country, with its wide, dry stretches of level land and its endless crops — rice, maize, lentils, its pariah-haunted villages here and there, its tanks and its temples and its scrubby jungles. Travel a thousand miles across the plains of India, and you will find the same monotonous tracts of land at both ends of your journey. In striking contrast to the arid, ascetic country are the brilliant towns—living pictures in the Impressionist style. Yet, sometimes, by the rural roadside, you glimpse a picturesque little “bit”; I saw such a one on

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the way to Kutub :—fantastic goats, browsing on arid, rocky ground, watched by a herd-girl, slender and slightly clad, with a shock of tangled hair and a certain savage grace, her bright eyes gleaming like pools of moonlit water from their soft rings of kohl. It was a conventional, pretty pastoral, such as you might see in any gallery, flanked by a portrait of a city magnate and a baby with a fox-terrier.

Along the road to Kutub I saw many serais, resting-places for travellers,—a serai is a kind of native public-house with the drink left out. These are gaily painted little huts, looking like Hindu temples to the eye of the Uninitiated. Ofttimes one sees a bullock-cart peacefully chewing its cud beside a serai, while its lord and master smokes his hookah within ;—I have often longed to be a bullock-driver ! It is so peaceful a life, so serene and long-winded. To steer a pair of bullocks along a road, as clouds along a summer sky, without haste, without rest, without perceptible motion ! To think of nothing at all, to chew the mental cud day and night, to alternate sunlight and moonlight, dawn and sunset, on the self-same white road, and never to take any interest in anything whatever ! An idyllic life,

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comparable with that of Marius the Epicurean. But, alas! I am a tourist and not a bullock-driver, and the Kutub Minar is the tallest tower in India (Delhi abounds in superlatives), 242 feet high, if my memory holds good. Beside the 900 feet of the Eiffel Tower that height seems poor. This Minar is a fluted red stone column, massive and symmetrical, tapering slightly from the base to the summit. It is adorned with the Koran in Arabic characters. These I could not read; I am less Semitic of origin than my name might seem to imply. I did not ascend to "the 'ighest branches of the loftiest trees" of the Minar; I went up to the first platform only.

Near the Minar are the ruins of a Hindu Temple, 1600 years old, so the legend runs. This is called the Temple of a Thousand Pillars, and, as each one is different and sympathetic in design, the effect of the whole is refreshing, after a surfeit of conventional mosques. Hard by is the first tomb ever built (a woeful landmark to the tourist!); it is of the same age as the Kutub Minar, some 650 years; the inscriptions on its carved stone walls are in Arabic and Coptic and Persian,—I tell you this for the sake of the lordly swing of the names.

Now, doubtless these ruins of Kutub are interesting, but when all is said and thought, tombs lack vitality and verve,—in short, tombs pall! Personally, I prefer the Chandni Chowk and the rainbow native life, and the sights which have the fluidity of music. Delhi Bazar is a joy for ever. These people of the North-West are bigger and stronger and brighter than those elsewhere, and their artistic tastes are more vivid and original.

I saw some fine specimens of mankind, though not of womankind, at Delhi, notably some Afridis with a splendid uncouth beauty of their own, huge hillmen in baggy trousers and massive turbans with curious peaked crowns; they were like the ogres in the fairy tales, only better looking. They must be a tough nut for our soldiers to crack, hand-to-hand. And the animals of the North-West are better grown and more vigorous than those elsewhere; the very dhobi's donkey is quite a superb beast in these parts! Without doubt, Delhi is a beautiful city, with its parks, where you see the flying foxes hanging head downwards from the branches, and the monkeys at play, and its red walls, and its strings of camels, and its soul-satisfying

Chandni Chowk. And so well set-up are the natives in this part of the world, that—as a charming lady of my acquaintance once remarked of her duskier brothers—one might almost think they were human.

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. . . JEYPORE
. (A STUDY IN
ROSE-JACYNTH)



JEYPORE is the Apotheosis of Buszard. Jeypore is a dazzling city of pink cakes of wondrous designs. For its splendid houses of two, three, and four storeys high are rose-coloured to the exact shade of a pink cake, and, moreover, they are decorated with graceful, fantastic designs in white—sugar, I am sure !

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Rose-
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One does not need rose-coloured spectacles to appreciate Jeypore. For the wonderful town is a shimmer of rose-jacynth throughout ; its wide, grand streets all pink ! its fine houses—in the Hindu style of architecture, varied and picturesque, and all different in design though uniform in colour—pink. These Arabian-Night-like houses of the Bazar have soft green shutters to their lowest storey, where the merchants display their wares ; and they have overhanging balconies, with pink and white carved lattices. The mingled turquoise and sapphire of the Indian sky, seen through those rose-coloured screens, must make an exquisite mosaic. But this rose-coloured city is not too monotonous of hue ; sometimes the ubiquitous pink is all overbroidered—one can use no other word—with other colours—green and blue and white—images of gods, flowers, horses ; but these more elaborate

JEYPORE cakes are rare. The pink erection, decorated
(A Study in beautifully with white sugar tracery, is almost
Rose- universal. The main streets of the Bazar are
Jacynth) very wide and spacious, even somewhat suggest-
tive of a Parisian boulevard, but there are many
soul-satisfying narrow alleys running down mys-
teriously somewhat behind the pink houses.

Still, the chief impression made by Jeypore is one of Maharajah-like magnificence.

In the middle of the town is the great square market-place,—thronged with blue-grey pigeons and Brahminy bulls and chaffering natives (sweet-meats seem the staple wares of the Bazar in this idyllic city),—spacious as the Place de la Concorde. In the heart of the Bazar is the Palace of the Winds, a grand rose-jacynth cake with a towering, fantastic façade in the Saracenic style, frosted with white sugar tracery of rare design. Standing on the shining steps of the Palace of the Winds one is indeed

*“Devant une façade rose,
Sur le marbre d’un escalier.”*

This Palace of the Winds—the title takes me hugely—is the headquarters of the innumerable sacred pigeons which cover Jeypore in clouds. Only less numerous than these are the Brahminy

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bulls, which wander at will about the wonderful streets,—placid and lordly beasts with velvety black hides, that strike an enchanting note in the pink-and-white colour symphony. Up and down the Bazar flows a vivid stream of natives and camels and bullock-carts and ekkas, and Rajputs on gaily caparisoned little Turkoman horses. The plain theme of the bullock-cart is wondrously orchestrated in these parts: here you see bullocks drawing glorified chariots, with painted canopies and freights of tinselled, silken women. And if you are lucky, you may even see an elephant lumbering along, or a peacock displaying his jewelled fan by the roadside. And you are sure to meet the Maharajah's hunting cheetahs, under convoy of their keepers—lithe, sinewy cats, with their eyes bandaged (they would go for anything they saw); these are let slip on black-buck in the desert.

Jeypore is a typically Hindu town, as its sacred bulls and pigeons declare; and it abounds in quaint Hindu temples, with long flights of pink steps, dotted with little grey doves. I was so fortunate as to be at Jeypore during the "Holi,"—a disreputable Hindu festival in honour of Krishna, which takes place about the 7th of

March. The natives all get drunk on this auspicious occasion, and they also cover themselves with rose-coloured paint. I chanced to meet a great procession of the revellers in the Bazar—several huge elephants, with gorgeous caparisons and painted ears and foreheads, their white tusks banded with brass; camels and Turkoman horses, all gaily adorned, and crowds of brilliant natives. The effect in the pink bewildering Bazar of Jeypore was most beautiful, mad, and impossible.

One does not weary of rose-jacynth Jeypore; though the town is in the key of pink, the colour is merely dominant, not monotonous. Here and there pink modulates into green or white,—indeed, the tall minaret which marks the centre of the town has so far forgotten its sense of fitness as to be ivory white. Likewise the palace of the Maharajah departs from tradition by being coffee-coloured,—a coffee-coloured cake of expensive make, with white sugar tracery. It is a huge, rambling building, with a wilderness of courtyards and corridors and halls, wherein hundreds of sacred pigeons and a few stately peacocks disport themselves. This palace is furnished in a curious style,—a mixture of garish Hindu and European-in-the-worst-possible

taste. Grotesque, Oriental, inartistic magnificence combines with red satin sofas and out-of-date pier-glasses framed in ormolu. The result can be imagined !

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The palace garden is very large, and filled with fountains and pagodas and fragrant lemon groves ; at one end is a big tank, wherein the sacred crocodiles take their ease. It is a sight to see them fed ! Their keeper calls them from their happy dreams on the mud-banks, "Come brothers, come !" And the great brutes slide sullenly into the water and swim across—moving points of horror—to the feeding-place, where they fight for their raw meat : horrible things, twelve and even sixteen feet long, with appalling jaws and jagged teeth. I longed to put half a pound of lead into one ! How they growled, and hissed, and snapped at one another !

I cannot fathom wherein lies the holiness of a crocodile. Sacred bulls and pigeons and peacocks and dogs and monkeys are all very well,—but crocodiles ! Asia carries her vivid Pantheism rather too far.

I visited the Maharajah's stable—an imposing cloister-like quadrangle enclosing a spacious tan exercising ground. Here are 300 horses, kept

mainly for show, and fed (Heaven help them!) on sugar and ghee and treacle, to make them fat, wherefore they are sadly out of condition. The Maharajah has many breeds,—Arab, Kathiawar, Turkoman, and even English, and one or two tiny Burmese ponies, not over ten hands in height. They say the Maharajah rides these. I don't know how he does it!

One of the great man's peculiarities is a preference for three hundreds: he has 300 horses, 300 dogs,—oversized, snappy little beasts,—and 300 dancing girls. Of the last triple century, O Jehannum! I cannot judge.

An enlightened man is the Maharajah, with a taste for beaded mats and billiard-tables. He has civilised his beautiful city. And now Jeypore is like a fairy-tale with an unfortunate veneer of Parisian boulevard. Alas! the streets are paved, and lit with gas; there are a Museum, a Zoo, and also a School of Art.

Now the roof and crown of Jeypore art is its brass-work—its wrought and enamelled brass vases and tables and trays. This is very seductive, and the whole town teems with it. Most costly and curious is the gold enamel work. I saw one perfect little gold peacock, with the

intricate gem-like feathers marvellously reproduced in both colour and form. One sees many wrought scimitars and daggers with the curved Rajput blade, and jade-hasted knives, and strange, polished leather shields, ornamented with embossed brass.

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So much for present-day Jeypore. Yet more interesting is the deserted city of Amber or Amer, some four miles off—among the hills. And it seems a romantic thing to ride an elephant to the ivory palace of Amber, which crests a picturesque peak. Yet I went up in an ekka, an adorable, jolty contrivance, with a painted ceiling-cloth and a pair of meek-eyed bullocks.

The old city of Amber is beautiful in its decay as a nocturne of Chopin. Hyenas and deer and monkeys range its deserted palaces, and Hindu fakirs frequent its ruined temples. It is a dreamy, snaky town, set in a lovely hollow of green hills and shallow lakes—mostly dried up—and cactus hedges with their flame-like flowers; peacocks gem its rocky ways, and clouds of pigeons hover round it. The ancient palace is a wonderful old place, with a labyrinth of courts and painted chambers and pillared halls,

JEYPORE commanding hill and dale and tiger jungle; its
(A Study in walled-in garden is odorous of jasmine and lemon
Rose-
Jacynth) trees; and the temple within its court holds the dark shrine of the goddess Durga, a black-faced demon with her head slightly averted,—she is turning in anger from the poor daily sacrifice of a goat at her altar (so the legend runs); in the old romantic days she used to have a man for breakfast every morning. I can quite understand her feelings. Very sinister and mysterious looked the black little temple, with the dull lamp faintly glaring on the grim face of the goddess,—they knew how to stage their horrors in the olden time! Here, once a year, the Maharajah sacrifices a buffalo, striking off its head with one blow. Here also a hundred of his nobles sacrifice buffaloes, and he who fails to strike off the creature's head at one blow pays a fine of Rs. 1000. These Rajputs are a fine race, and they seldom have to disburse, I believe.

Their Maharajah is something of a sportsman. Besides buffalo beheading, he is extremely fond of tiger-shooting; and this is how they're shot:— A buffalo is tethered in the jungle, beside it is placed a bowl of doctored water; when the casual tiger has consumed the unhappy buffalo,

he naturally feels thirsty, drinks deep, and sinks into a state of beastly intoxication. Thus he falls an easy prey to the guns. This is a very Bowdlerised edition of tiger-shooting, is it not?

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All round Amber is the tiger country; indeed, so wild is the scenery, that one thinks one might pot a tiger from the palace window.

The Maharajah also cultivates live tigers, keeping them in a kind of miniature Zoo in the city of Jeypore. I went to see them—magnificent brutes with velvet hides, sleek and supple and splendid, fearsome beasts, fierce from the Amber jungles. I should think the catching of a tiger must be a dainty job!

One sees strange barbaric things in the old uncivilised palace of Amber.

Besides the excellent billiard-table and the shrine of the goddess Durga, I saw the old brocaded chariot in which the Maharanee of long ago used to drive her slaves like horses—silver bits in their mouths, silken reins in her hands.

To me the sentiment of Amber suggests that of Chopin, strangely,—its dead barbarisms, its moonlight seclusion, its pensive romance, the endless illusion that Time has woven round its

mouldering splendours, its “dead past” atmosphere,—Chopin and Shelley.

Nine hundred years ago the city of Amber sprang up, and the city wall is standing yet, surrounded by ruins, mouldering exquisitely, decaying slowly, magically, in the clear Indian air. Looking from the palace on the hill, one has a splendid view of the deserted town far below in the valley; it still seems almost inhabitable, its temples and palaces yet make a brave show,—and it is all as lifeless as the city of Ys under the Breton waves. It is true that jackals and wolves and snakes have taken up their abode in it, and there may be ghosts, of course; but one sees no trace of these in the midday sunshine, from the hill above. I should like to visit Amber by moonlight, and meet the spirit of the East in her white fire-shroud revisiting her deserted halls. But I should not like to step on a cobra!

Only the moon-fire makes clear those mystic characters, traced in the invisible ink of Fancy, that shine out on every antique stone—as surely as any of those inscriptions in the Persian and Arabic you can’t read. When the moonlight falls thick as snow on old ruins, it clasps a legend in each ray,—which it is your business to decipher,

and turn into marketable (oh, uncommonly cheap!) English.

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But I know I have read most of the Amber legends already—in Chopin. Either in the body or out of the body, as St. Paul would say, Chopin must have visited Amber; his strange West-Eastern opium imaginings sometimes lose all trace of the West, and then they revert to Amber. All Chopin players should make a pilgrimage to Amber; saving you are a genius, you cannot play Chopin with full comprehension unless you have been to Amber. For Amber and Chopin are almost interchangeable terms.

Jeypore and Amber are extraordinary and unique cities, set in the wild and lovely country of Rajputana—that Rajputana which is an idyllic Native State, where the Rajahs have prancing steeds and cloth-of-gold; where the landscape has wild, sharp hills, and sandy deserts and jewelled peacocks; where the native's dress is more than common gay; where the Blue bird of Romance flies higher than the White bird of Truth, and the hotels are impossible.



BENARES



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THE train which took me to the holy city went slow as the feet of Virtue. Long hours had I waited at Moghal Serai, and I arrived at Benares about sunset. The dense, dim city was shadowy in the rose light, seen across the great river; only the two tall minarets of Aurungzeb's mosque were sharply defined on the sky.

Morning is the time to see Benares: in Benares you want all the light you can get.

So next day I rose uncomfortably early and went to see the Bathing in the River. I got on board a boat, and was rowed slowly up-stream past the bathing ghats, past a medley of temples and palaces, flights of stone steps, cows, Brahmins, glittering brass lotas, pilgrims, myriads of bathers, and, floating down the green lifeless wave, chaplets of marigold and jasmine flowers (sole sweet-ness of Benares), pious offerings to the holy stream. For two miles the water's edge was fringed with bathers, men and women performing their devotional rites; from widows with shaved heads to holy Brahmins with their sacred cord, squatting at ease on raised wooden platforms, shaded by huge, mushroom-like umbrellas, and receiving the offerings of the Pious. Everyone

BENARES who bathes is expected to give money to the Brahmin within range.
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Everywhere are temples with curious, conical, carved domes, which give them the effect of gigantic pine cones, and a majestic chain of palaces stretches along the river bank,— the palace of the Maharajah of Jeypore, of the Gaikwar of Baroda, of the Maharajah of Nagpur: these Rajahs come to die here, to ensure their safe passage to Paradise.

One or two old palaces and temples have slipped into the river, and their ruins remain a happy drying-ground for the ubiquitous dhobi and his donkey.

Now these are not ordinary donkeys, these meek, cow-hocked asses on the river bank; they are lost spirits!—the lost souls of those who died across the river on the south bank. If you die on the wrong side of the Ganges, your soul is reincarnated as a dhobi's donkey. What a theme for Robert Hichens! And is it not a solemn and awful reflection to think that your clean shirts are bound on the back of the Damned, and thus conveyed to your Hotel?

Here and there in the moving panorama one comes to a Burning Ghat, where the Doms burn

the dead, and fling the ashes into the holy river. There is an almost incessant train of funerals; everyone who possibly can, comes to die in Benares.

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As I was drifting back, down-stream, in my rickety boat, past tower and town, there came a sudden burst of barbaric music from the upper storey of a Rajah's palace—Eastern pipes and a roll of drums—so exciting, monotonous, wild and sensuous, it seemed unearthly music, seductive and fascinating and discordant; inconsequent and wayward as a bird's song, it lived and died. It seemed to open out another psychological world of things unknown, and after hearing it I understood Benares better. The soloist was a real musician, he played with such abandon, grace, and fire,—he played like a Hungarian gipsy.

Benares is a nightmare, a labyrinthine opium-dream. It has the quaintness, the impossibility of Grieg's "Peer Gynt" music; it is like a weird fairy tale gone out of tune,—and you're lucky if you escape typhoid!

I walked through the narrow, tortuous lanes crowding down to the river, where bulls and cows and beggars innumerable bar the way, and marigold and jasmine wreaths give the only

BENARES
(*March*) breathable odours. I went up twisted, wonderful stairways at the heels of a Brahmin priest, and peered into temples ; the Cows' Temple, where the Faithful were kissing their tails ; the Golden Temple, with its dazzling dome burning in the molten sunshine and silhouetted on the deep blue sky,—hard by, the dark red, gold-flecked cone of another temple : the colouring was splendid ! Now Benares is, *par excellence*, the city of Shiva, the lord of Death and Birth, whose gilt trident and bull image are ubiquitous, on temple and in street. And this Golden Temple is under Shiva's special patronage ; so I was much surprised, on entering the same, to see an image of Ganesh, the elephant-headed god, at the door. Whereupon my guide told me a quaint tale, which I might call MONSIEUR, MADAME, ET BÉBÉ.

Ganesh, it seems, is the son of Shiva and Parbati. There is a strange and picturesque legend accounting for his having an elephant's head on his shoulders. One day Parbati wished to bathe in her chamber, and very naturally, preferring solitude on such an occasion, she stationed her son Ganesh at the door to keep out intruders. Shiva returning unexpectedly, intoxicated with Bhang, tried to force his way

in, and, becoming enraged by his son's resistance (Ganesh did not recognise his father in that disgraceful condition!), struck off his head. Hearing the noise, Parbati ran out and slanged her husband vigorously. Whereupon, Shiva snatched off the head nearest to hand, which happened to be an elephant's, and clapped it hastily on to the neck of Ganesh.

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To console him for the loss of his natural head, Ganesh was elevated to the rank of the foremost god; he takes precedence of all other gods and goddesses—including his father in his father's own temple! It is but fitting that he should be the patron saint of Literature.

Many of the Hindu legends are extremely quaint; the stories about the different sacred wells of Benares—the Well of Fate, the Well of Knowledge, the Holy Well—are weirdly humorous, and the heathen bards display what kindly critics might term an admirable capacity for good literary fooling.

I have been much struck by the exotic beauty of Eastern phrase. I remember, in especial, one poetic inscription over a Queen's doorway:—“The dust of thy courts is collyrium for the eyes of the heavenly Hoor.” (What a compliment to

BENARES pay a coal-heaver !) How wonderfully poetic
(March) are these similes of the old Orientals, with their flowery cadence and their jewelled diction ! They were not afraid of critics ; they wrote as free men of letters, they did not have to consider the susceptibilities of printer's devils or editors, and their style has a polished grace perfect in its affectation and its beauty. They would no more have written in a journalistic, straightforward way than those marvellous old broiderers would have followed the living lines of the flowers they wove with the silken thread. No mere objectivity, but subjective art was theirs, delicately untrue to life as it was true to beauty. Let us return to the subject of temples.

I went to see the Monkey Temple, a little way out of the city. In the innermost shrine of this temple, where the profane may not penetrate, is the silver-faced image of Durga or Kali, the demon goddess. Here every Tuesday goats are sacrificed, for the mutual benefit of the priest and goddess. I wonder who appreciates them the better ! This temple is a bizarre building of dark red sandstone, of a peculiarly warm, rich tint ; its dome is in the conventional pine-cone style, and it is pleasingly decorated with a living

arabesque of monkeys—gay, pretty little beasts, with pleasing manners and sleek coats. These are fed on grain and sweets by the Pious. Those happy monkeys have things all their own way, and the adjacent Bazar is to them what the Spanish Main was to the Elizabethan Pirate. Their sanctity shields them from the consequences of stealing; indeed, I am not sure that they don't leave a valuable spiritual blessing in place of the worthless material things they have looted.

BENARES
(*March*)

How very wearisome these excursions to see things are! I felt it incumbent on me to visit also the "Earliest Buddhistic Remains" at Sarnath—some four miles from Benares. The Remains were not architecturally exciting; indeed, I have rarely seen relics of Antiquity so depressingly bald as these of Buddha, the romantic ascetic. Picture a large stony mound topped by a round house (Buddha's dwelling, and also Mrs. Buddha's, said the guide), and a large ruined tower, from which Buddha used to preach (said the guide). Some half-mile off was Buddha's deer forest, where he underwent an incarnation as a Stag of Ten. Said the guide, "Buddha was very strong; he could jump from his tower to the forest."

BENARES Beside this tower there was a huge, spreading tree. Could it have been the Bô-tree?

(*March*) Near Benares city there lives a holy man called the Swami, who is a kind of cheap lithograph of the great Buddha. The incidents of his life are precisely the same as those of Buddha's life. He is a serene ascetic ; he has deserted his family, and he is already worshipped as a god, having the reputation of a worker of miracles. I can well believe in his miraculous endowments, for he does not accept "backsheesh."

All tourists go to call on the holy man ; and, as the holy man cannot speak English, and they can't speak Hindustani, there is much mutual edification.

Benares is not merciless in point of excursions, and the country round is thickly wooded, and the roads are good. It is, therefore, sometimes a relief to escape into the green, fresh suburbs from the hot, crowded Bazar. But the inversion holds good, and I was glad to escape from Buddhistic Remains into the Brass Bazar, noisiest quarter of the town, where they hammer and tinker and chase the sounding brass, and the tinkling cymbal of the craftsman is rarely silent. Benares brass bowls are wrought in peculiarly

graceful shapes. The delicate lines of a Benares vase will drive a minor poet at once to his sonnet, and the quaint arabesques that fret the polished surface of a tray will turn a turner of paradoxes green with envy.

BENARES
(*March*)

At Benares you vainly regret all the enamelled brass you bought at Jeypore, so much more beautiful and effective is the embossed, chased brass of Benares. Then you are shown the "Kincob" that you have heard so much about, the silken, gold-wrought stuff with which the Rajahs love to deck their dusky forms. This far-famed Kincob is gold wire, embroidered exquisitely on silk of any colour—green, pink, violet. It is beautiful enough, I dare say, but it lacks imagination; all its patterns are conventional, and show but little trace of extravagant Oriental fancy. You would hardly expect to find Kincob at Benares—that wonderful, incoherent, bewildering Eastern city, where hideous little scarlet gods dot the streets, where overwhelming crowds of priests and fakirs and beggars and bulls rend the sky with one mighty cry of—"Backsheesh!" Backsheesh is the *leit-motif*, the ruling deity of Benares. Shiva isn't in it!

Cries of backsheesh pursued me as I slid

BENARES
(March) peacefully across the great Ganges bridge in the leisurely train towards Moghal Serai, where I waited serenely for hours and hours and hours. Railway travelling in India is undoubtedly luxurious, and the only drawback to these commodious, Lucullus-like trains is—that you never get there! For they have an Alice-in-Wonderland practice of gradually lessening their rate of speed as they approach their destination. The natives don't mind; they like it! I heard of some natives who were shifted, en route, into a siding, and there they sat for two days without moving!

Yes! Indian railway trains are comfortable enough, but there is so much bread to this jam of travelling!

JUBBULPORE

III



J UBBULPORE is famous for the manufacture of lovely spunky soda-water, and also for its proximity to the marble rocks of the Ner-budda. It is, likewise, a convenient resting-place between Calcutta and Bombay. And if you look on the map you will find it just in the very heart of India.

JUBBUL-
PORE
(March)

I arrived at Jubbulpore during a tremendous nocturnal thunderstorm. I saw it first by the romantic glare of tropic lightning athwart a sheet of tearing rain which seemed trying to break down the great bamboo avenues that shelter the town. But Jubbulpore is not a romantic place at all; it is a nice, clean, tidy military station, and practically non-existent as regards the East. The country round, however, is very beautiful, mountainous and wild. You soon leave the prosaic town for the sylvan glories of the Marble Rocks,—a drive of some ten miles. One gets heartily sick of all these interminable drives in India, but somehow this drive to the Nerbudda is less boring than most. The scenery is varied, hill and jungle and stream occasionally break the monotonous line of crops; the bullock-carts have a certain individuality of structure, and the gaudily clad native women are rather better looking than usual.

JUBBUL-
PORE
(March)

Also, I saw an old grey ape sitting pensively in a rice field by the roadside, and a little blue bird like a jewel, which suggested the Blue bird of Romance. Some villagers were getting married, too, in fantastic adornments, like children's toys out of Christmas crackers. Altogether, the scenery was considerably above the average in both natural and artistic features.

At last I reached the Nerbudda. This is a deep, narrow, refreshing sort of river, which flows between cliffs of white, luminous marble, here and there sun-stained to the tint of old ivory. The effect of the blue stream paving the white marble gorge is very beautiful. You are rowed down the wonderful channel in dreamy silence, for fear of disturbing the numerous bees who have chosen this idyllic place for their honey factories. Here and there, as you look up at the overhanging white cliffs on either side, you will see huge black hives suspended from the rock, and busy bees buzzing all about them. These bees have a very rational and proper dislike to noise, and, as they usually kill you if you speak, it is wiser to be silent. The local guide-book is full of alarming legends on the subject of those bees' idiosyncrasy. I should like to see them put through a course of

piano organs, ships' sirens, and piano recitals. They would soon be cured of their folly.

JUBBUL-
PORE
(March)

But, after all, the bees are quite right in suppressing tourist conversations. For what do tourists talk about? The health of their sandwiches, the safety of their tickets, and the extortions of their hotel-keepers. Personally, I am with the bees. I do not approve of conversation in general. Conversation only becomes endurable —in particular. A *tête-à-tête* is its sole satisfactory form. But then I am hardly a rational judge of the talking art, since, as a conversationalist, I have a genius for the Unessential, a passion for the Impossible, and a limitless faculty of Failure.

So we floated in silver silence down the ivory gorge, paved with foam-starred lapis-lazuli, and domed with sapphire. They say that alligators frequent the radiant stream of the Nerbudda, but I didn't see any. I saw a pensive galaxy of monkeys sitting in the trees on the top of the cliff, and also a depressing bird, which fulfilled my ideal of the "mimsy borogove" in *Through the Looking-Glass*. This doleful bird emitted a desolate cry as he spread his untidy wings and his ungraceful neck, and fled into a tangled wonder of jungle.

JUBBUL-
PORE
(March)

Wild and picturesque jungles surround the Marble Rocks, luxuriant trees and prickly bushes press down to the river at either end of the gleaming gorge; far in the distance is a low, long chain of blue hills, the hills of Central India. This is undoubtedly a charming spot; and if you had only been placed here casually, instead of being brought specially to see it, you would have been delighted with it. Alas! in travelling, one nearly always arrives at the right place at the wrong moment (only in Paris, Vienna, and Port Said does the inversion hold good). When your temper and your delicate nerves have been jolted some decade of miles along a hot, rough road, you are in no mood to enjoy or appreciate scenery; you are probably more interested in the possible refreshments at the Dâk bungalow.

Just in the same way, you are not attuned to music when you go to a concert,—unless you are going to hear some particular pet, and your heart is on fire beyond the power of the cold water of place and circumstance.

When I have been travelling and seeing sights for a fortnight or so, I cease to take any interest in anything but the back numbers of London papers I find in the hotel sitting-room. I can't

understand those people who, of their own free will, travel and excursion (from the substantive—excursion) for months and months on end. I came out to India mainly to visit friends, and sandwiched my apes and peacocks with spells of regular hum-drum home-life. Life in the Indian Mofussil is rather nice ; it is adorably monotonous and luxurious, with plenty of outdoor pleasures—more especially riding and smoking. Its chief drawback is the necessity for early rising ; you have to get up at unearthly hours. But then you also go to bed early, and most people sleep for a couple of hours in the middle of the day, to awake feeling like “ a boiled owl,” as they quaintly express it. Let us return to Jubbul-pore ! Jubbulpore is a big English Station, with a large number of troops, and it abounds in ugly grey and white bungalows, smart dogcarts, good roads, broad grass “ maidans,” and Anglo-Indians. It has that peculiarly tidy, rectangular air which military stations always acquire—a look as if the trees were drilled every morning and the roads pipeclayed. Its magnificent bamboos somewhat redeem it—towering, feathery green giants wherein the ring-doves coo and the squirrels play ; but bamboos are all it has to offer the aesthetic sense.

JUBBUL- Its native Bazar is not remarkable in any way ;
PORE indeed, Jubbulpore is a most restful place to
(March) visit, inasmuch as there is nothing to see in it, except one old temple which crests an exhausting neighbouring hill, from which you get a magnificent view of spirited country, hills and jungle and cultivated land, and, far away, the blue vein of the Nerbudda running between shadowy white rocks,—at least, you imagine these latter.

The Hot-weather bird teased me a good deal at Jubbulpore ; it is as irritating as a critic ! One reads much of the Eastern Bulbul singing to the Persian rose in starlit thickets, of Lusciola Philomela, whose voice transcends the silver witcheries of Grieg and the golden discords of Wagner ; but, when I walked in the rose-garden at Jubbulpore, or elsewhere, I never heard anything but the Hot-weather bird. This undesirable fowl has a piercing flute-like voice, and it sings one phrase of three notes, which sounds like “we feel it,” over and over again, till the nerve of your ear aches and tingles. The Hot-weather bird sings day and night; it is a wide-awake creature, with extraordinary energy and determination. I infinitely prefer the Jackal as a

musician ; he has at least a fine range of notes, a long scale of sound. You hear jackals singing their part-songs every night in India. As you sit under the stars in the brilliant tropic night, out of the velvet darkness comes a weird long-drawn howl, almost as unendurable as that of an infant, then another, then a whole chorus of wonderful, fighting discords, shrill, unearthly, unholy,—like Cerberus' puppies yelping at the Gate of Hell. After such a burst of symphonic music, suddenly all sound will cease—save the harsh twitter of owls in the bushes, and the faint sigh of the night wind in the palms. Jackal music is splendidly spontaneous, lyrical as Heine's! I like listening to the jackals; they remind me of Berlioz's "Symphonie Fantastique."

It is extraordinary what a number of jackals India possesses ! Jackals swarm all over the country, even in the more civilised parts, even in Jubbulpore. Central India is a great place for wild animals of all sorts. I fancy you could shoot many kinds of fearsome beasts round Jubbulpore—the jungles look most promising; and the savage, beautiful country is in strange contrast with the prim, comfortable town.

JUBBUL
PORE
(*March*)



CALCUTTA

Q

I2I



WHEN your train arrives at that mystic CALCUTTA
pillared cloister which mortals call *(April)*
Howrah, you get out and charter a very fourth-rate tikka-gharri, with twin horses melancholy as Genius, and rattle across the great Hooghly bridge to Calcutta proper. The river reminds you somewhat of the Thames; it has the same silvery sheen and slightly tired look, it is studded with ships, and you miss the dome of St. Paul's a little. Indeed, a sense of that loss haunts Calcutta; the trail of the Englishman is over the town. It is terribly depressing to find fine shops, where you can get all you want—impossible prosaic things such as shirts and socks and Kodaks—in an Indian city. The splendour of the Calcutta shops appalled me, and when I entered a music-shop, which might have been Augener's, I nearly wept. And one should be on one's guard against any superfluous emotion in Calcutta; it doesn't suit the climate. Indeed, Calcutta in April is very distinctly balmy, and one exists there by the grace of the punkah-wallah and by ice. Frankly, I do not like the punkah; it ruffles my hair dreadfully, and makes me hotter and hotter. I have often wondered why musicians never will

CALCUTTA visit Calcutta on their colonial tours,—I know
(April) now !

The Calcutta punkah-wallahs are notorious. All the exhausting night through I bellowed at mine, “Kincho Soor!” (Pull, Pig!) and still I heard an errant mosquito buzzing (most hateful of all sounds!) round my head. When your mosquito curtains are taken down, night punkahs are a passionate necessity, whether they please you in the abstract or not. How I longed to mingle the hearts’ blood of the punkah-wallah and the mosquito! But I am wonderfully diffident and shy when things come to the point.

Now Peliti’s (the Indian Buszard) is a fair oasis in the desert of shops ; they give you excellent ices at Peliti’s, and you are in a mood to appreciate such things. Also, the literary associations of Peliti’s are so many ; all the Indian books you ever read devoted at least one paragraph to Peliti,—and who am I that I should despise tradition? At Peliti’s one realises the civilisation of Calcutta. Considered as a European town, Calcutta is splendid and sumptuous; the houses in the fashionable quarter just behind Chowringhee are all that could be desired, and

the name of the smartest street is Park Street! CALCUTTA
The palanquin-bearers by the roadside, and the bheesties showering water from their goat-skins,
just save the situation; but Park Street is rather hard to assimilate in this quarter of the globe.

(April)

The great Maidan, where Beauty and Office drive of an evening, might be Hyde Park or the Bois, if it were not much finer than either. It is a delightful open space, three miles across, carpeted with green turf, enamelled with trees, and decorated with an arabesque of roads,—more especially the Red Road, the favourite drive, which is graced by an avenue of rare casuarinas, tall shadowy trees with a Northern glamour and gloom, and the foliage of asparagus fern, and the sentiment and colour of a pine-tree—save the bark is not so red, it has but the faintest flush. This tree is as popular with the little grey Indian squirrels as the English pine is with our Titian-esque, ruby-tawny little beasts.

On the west, this Maidan is bounded by the river; the tall masts and spider's web rigging of the ships have a most strange effect seen from the fashionable drive,—they blur the sense of tropic peace and luxury with a hint of departure and rougher climes.

CALCUTTA On the north side is Government House, a
(April) sufficiently ugly and imposing building. On the east is Chowringhee, where are the hotels and the big shops and the Bengal Club; there is not a hint of native life in this part of the town, and the casual natives strolling about in their simple attire, which involves a good deal of polished bronze, look quite out of place.

The red gold-mohur trees are a great feature of Calcutta, and they brighten up Chowringhee somewhat; they are very decorative, and quite unique; the whole tree is so covered with scarlet blossom that it glows like a flame in the sunshine; it is a wild-looking, seductive tree.

To the south of the Maidan is Belvedere, the house of the Elgee, which I find signifies Lieutenant-Governor, and the Zoo, the truly ravishing Zoo, which is quite the prettiest spot in Calcutta, —a little enchanted wilderness of jewel lakes starred with water lilies, and soft green lawns, and clusters of palms and feathery bamboos, and wonderful shadowy trees of unknown names and endless varieties. Some of the flowering shrubs and flowers I do happen to know, such as the scarlet hibiscus, with its blood-red, bell-like flowers; the white, starry oleander, with its

Chopinesque perfume ; the violet-purple bougain- CALCUTTA
villæa, which covers its bush with gorgeous
blossom ; the many-coloured, vivid crotons,—it
is useless to reel out names, tropical gardens are
like fairyland. By one of the lakes I saw a
native fishing under a delicious tree, which
drooped feathery branches and dancing shadows
down to the tremulous water, gleaming silver and
jade-green in the early dusk ; how I envied that
chocolate native paddling in the cool !

The Zoo Authorities have been so well advised
as to admit the scarlet ibis into their garden, and
the effect of these brilliant and pensive birds
lounging about among the tropic plants is
exquisite.

The animals in the Zoo don't look happy ;
one lion seemed to feel the heat terribly. Poor
beast ! Why don't they give him a punkah ?
The tigers were roaring angrily ; I could quite
sympathise with their feelings, it must be so
irritating to them to be in an Indian Zoo,—
rather like being kept a prisoner in your own
kingdom or back yard, as the case may be. The
very monkeys seemed to be thinking out pretty,
pallid conceits of minor poetry, so wistful were
they ; and the snakes were all asleep.

CALCUTTA Calcutta abounds in gardens. Only less
(April) charming than the Zoo are the Eden Gardens by the riverside, where the band plays every evening and the people walk. It is piquant and bizarre to listen to that military band playing the "Geisha" in the midst of pale, bored English men and women, while you fix your eyes on a solitary palm tossing in the south wind from the sea. I always imagined that the Eden Gardens were so called, in a poetic spirit, because of their beauty; I was much disappointed to hear they were merely named after some family or other. The shattering of ideals is always sad, sad as the fading of Illusion, sad as a cornet solo.

We haven't exhausted the Gardens yet, I regret to say. About four miles down the west bank of the river, past a gleaming panorama of coalyards and railways, are the Botanical Gardens—a beautifully kept paradise, unnaturally natural as "Imaginary Portraits." These are a kind of mosaic of rare trees and plants, and artificial lakes polished and clear as mirrors, which reflect the dazzling foliage, and are scarcely ruffled in their sylvan seclusion by the south wind that blows so continuously from the sea.

The limpid gloss of tropical pools is quite arres- CALCUTTA
tive ; you never see water so shining smooth in (*April*)
temperate climates.

You can drive for miles in the Botanical Gardens, down a vista of beauty—avenues of mahogany-trees with their brilliant green leaves, avenues of palms with straight silver stems and breezy, arching plumes, in which the winds whisper most musically ; you cross rustic bridges, spanning shallow lagoons, overgrown with starry convolvulus of Mediterranean blue ; you pass gay beds of red and white lilies and flowering shrubs innumerable, and in the heart of the garden you come to a great banyan-tree, covering about an acre of ground, which forms a kind of natural pagoda with its tortuous, fantastic, spreading branches overgrown with creepers and orchids,—such a tree as you might find in some unexplored South American forest. With the sun's glittering mosaic interweaving the ever-changing tracery of green leaf shadows, the ground beneath the banyan-tree looks splendid as a Persian palace floor inlaid with gold and jade and emerald. That garden must be charming at night, when the fire-flies gem the blue dark with tiny, wandering flames like toy Will-o'-the-wisps

CALCUTTA or electric fairy lights, and the jackals' symphonic music fills the air.
(April)

To me those gardens seem like some beautiful and exceedingly long poem, whereof the cadence flows in unending perfection,—but it is all a little cut and dried in spite of its freshness. Calcutta has so little of architectural and artistic interest that one is bound to fall back on its natural beauties, though descriptions of Nature are usually of the artistic value of Kodak photos. They have such a tendency to lapse into the careful "Guide-book," and the guide-book but rarely possesses that "marvellous tact of omission" which Walter Pater has so delicately phrased in pointing out the artist's chief charm. Calcutta Bazar is most disappointing. It is so incoherent and squalid; it has something of the picturesqueness of decay, certainly, but it lacks colour and originality and life. Bow Bazar is a tumble-down place with a happy-go-lucky style of architecture; here a tall house, there a hovel; and here a dissipated shed so propped up and plastered and patched that it becomes quite interesting, like an invalid. China Bazar is a squalid little lane with Anglicised shops. Even the natives don't dress gaily in Calcutta, there

are but few bright colours to be seen ; Calcutta is CALCUTTA
(April)
purely European.

Gardens are the city's chief charm ; they give it the semblance of a gigantic hothouse, and the climate in nowise dispels that illusion. In Calcutta, you feel as though you were living in a conservatory, exotic and enervating, and full of rare plants ; you are as eager for drink as any dried-up cactus, and as irritable.

The Indian heat is a peculiar and exhausting thing. It is a soft, moist heat which (not to be too paradoxical) dries you up. The sunshine is white and terrible, the blue of the sky is quite faint with heat, and the colours of the sunlit landscape seem to have lost their brilliance ; the sun sucks the life out of things, like a gigantic vampire.

Yet I don't dislike the Hot Weather. It gives you limitless leisure, for from ten o'clock to five you are obliged to stay indoors and do nothing in particular. This lotus-eating time beneath the punkah is by no means unpleasant to a lazy temperament, or to a literary one (synonymous, I hope). And the heat makes you feel delightfully slack.

In the evening, you feel sufficiently energetic

CALCUTTA to take a drive on the Maidan and to criticise
(April) unfavourably all the other people. You see many types,—Anglo-Indians with strange waxen complexions like those of the images at Madame Tussaud's, Eurasians and even natives! packed into Paris frocks. Now some women do not dress, they pack. Most of these Eurasians were packed in the sort of way that necessitates the footman sitting down on the lid when he locks the trunk.

A welcome eye-resting sight was the smart Ranee in her native splendours of pink and green satin and silken gauze, with her tawny-turbaned and sashed syces, as she dashed past in her incongruous English landau. Natives always look best in "wedding garments." Robed in diaphanous yellow, with languid kohl-darkened eyes, seen to the barbaric, clashing discords of strange Eastern music, a native woman becomes symbolic and attractive; in European dress she is a horror! Civilisation ruins the native. In Jeypore, I saw a nautch-girl who was the spirit of the Dance incarnate—she moved with such a wanton, wicked grace; her tinselled skirts were glorious with mock jewels. Do you think she will ever wear a false fringe and high-heeled shoes?

Civilisation is Calcutta's chief charm, besides

being her chief failing. For, after all, though I CALCUTTA
adore barbaric places, I do not like barbaric
(April)
hotels. It is indeed rather pleasant to find a little
European oasis in the splendid desert of Asia.

The Calcutta people are a very distressing folk. They have even less variety of type than of conversation. They are all of the complexion of either a kippered herring or a boiled sole, and they all ask you without ceasing how you like India. Their conversation is, indeed, heavily crippled by the loss of the Weather, inasmuch as, every day being of a steadfast and red-hot blueness, it is useless to remark, "Another fine day" while that shower of rain which is our stand-by in England, when we are gravelled for lack of words, is an unknown quantity in India. The Calcutta woman, you may take as a foregone conclusion, has never read anything, heard anything, or thought anything; and instead of this blissful state of vacuity making her quite charming, it only makes her dull. When she is not a Kiplingesque lady with a certain weary fascination—and so tired of her husband, she is a pink *ingénue* from Home, who has been shipped out very palpably to get married, as a pony is turned into a clover-field to get fed.



DARJILING



THE change from Calcutta to Darjiling—from 105° in the shade to 50°—is one of the most bewildering experiences possible to the amateur of sensations; it is almost as sudden and complete a change as Death itself, I should say. After twenty hours' travelling, you find a new world, with scenery wonderfully different from that you left, an arrestively different people and a distressingly different climate. The journey to the foot of the Hills is quite prosaic and ordinary; but at Siliguri, where you join the Himalayan railway, all things suffer a land change into something rich and strange—so strange! The train itself is a thrilling surprise. You mount the mighty Himalaya in a kind of toy train with an absurdly inadequate-looking little steam-engine; you feel as if you were on a merry-go-round at a village fair—and that sentiment is irresistible!

The train steams merrily along a toy line through the tiger-haunted Terai at the foot of the hills, past tea-gardens wafting aromatic scents, past dense jungles and little Lepcha villages, barricaded and raised from the ground on wooden props—by reason of the numerous wild beasts. At length you begin to mount through a sylvan, tropical forest.

DARJILING
(April)

DARJILING Now the Terai is a jungle rhapsody, an extravagant, impossible botanical *tour - de - force*, intensely modern in its Titanic, incoherent magnificence; it has the mad, malarial beauty of the Venusberg music. There is no use in trying to write sanely of the Terai, for the Terai is not sane,—it is a vegetable Venusberg!

The line winds tortuously up through a maze of dense jungle and unimaginable trees, often the car is level with the tops of the forest giants; in and out the line winds, round and round, each curve disclosing a new splendour of huge Hill and Valley—valley is too tame a word for the savage grandeur of the Himalayan gorges—vast, yawning ravines glowing with dense, impetuous tropic vegetation. In April, the trees' colouring is a commingling of the flames of Spring and Autumn, with the delicate, vivid green and citron of the young shoots, and the wine-dark amber and crimson of the dying leaves. This overwhelming Himalayan foliage reminded me strangely of Tchaikovsky's Pathetic Symphony,—its splendid, vivid tone-colouring on a ground-bass of passionate regret (even like a dowager made up for an evening party), and the changeful passion and fire of its symphonic beauty. It

most recalled Mottl's perfervid rendering of the March Movement, since Mottl's reading made the head ache more and the heart ache less than is quite consistent with pathos, while the mountain forest was rather savage than pathetic in its savage pathos. I trust I make myself incomprehensible?

DARJILING
(April)

I have never seen anything so wonderful as that Himalayan scenery. Sometimes the toy train was suspended sheer over a bottomless khud, sometimes the green-clothed rock touched the clouds above the little engine's head; we were crawling up the mountain side like a fly on a wall,—and at a good pace too! Over 7000 feet did we climb, and each upward step widened and enhanced our view of spurred hills and majestic mountains and unfathomable valleys between, while far to the South we glimpsed the low, hot plains, veined by a tortuous river which gleamed like a silver arabesque in the dim distance.

I think the first 2000 feet were the loveliest, —as the atmosphere grew colder the landscape grew more severe, and we lost the palm and the plantain and the towering magnolia trees and the wild, wonderful flowering shrubs and the orchid

DARJILING creepers for the massive, sombre ranks of the
(April) deodars, that live literally in the clouds ; yet we gained the tree-ferns, and they were exquisite. Thus, gradually, as we rose, the scenery grew more spirited and wild ; rocky streams shed glittering cascades far down the green khuds, sardine-green pines replaced emerald palms,—I am not quite sure that I liked the exchange,—and the air grew keen and energetic.

We took some six hours to get from Siliguri to Darjiling, and all the way we were continually stopping at quaint little stations with names like the clang of a bronze temple-bell—Toong, Kurseong, Ghoom ; we passed through extraordinary Lepcha villages, little wooden, elementary hamlets, inhabited by such strange people ! These Lepchas and Bhootheas are not in the least like the natives of India ; they are of a distinctly Mongolian type, with bizarre almond eyes and high cheek bones, pigtailed sometimes, and a generally Chinese or Japanese appearance ; they are uncommonly like some of the grotesque figures on Japanese screens—or the gargoyle on antique cathedrals. In complexion they are bay, a bright yellow bay ; they are extremely picturesque and plain, and their awkward,

appropriate dress harmonises perfectly with their features. They wear many clothes, for the climate is cold—*on dit*, they wear them till they drop off; they affect subdued bright colours, such as French-blouse blue, dull crimson, and brown and saffron; and both men and women (to know which is which, you pays your money and you takes your choice) have an inordinate passion for jewellery—silver and coral and curious turquoise trinkets. They wear the subdued patient expression of the bullock and the dweller among mountains, and they seem a cheerful, stupid people. Of the two races, the Lepchas are decidedly the more intelligent, but the Bhoooteas are certainly the more picturesque and impossible. Some of these were so uniquely and subtly and fancifully hideous that one would have given anything to have them in ivory or bronze on one's overmantel; I am sure I have seen Chinese carvings the image of those Bhoooteas! One old bay hag fascinated me much. She displayed a most delicate æsthetic instinct by the exquisitely decadent way in which she had garbed and enhanced her ugliness; a more becomingly repulsive *tout-ensemble* I have rarely seen.

I noticed that many of the men had fastened

DARJILING lotus flowers in their caps. I didn't know the
(April) lotus grew in such cold regions.

When you reach an elevation of 7000 feet, it is a bit chilly. The last part of the railway journey was very cold, and I was glad to arrive at Darjiling, where, to my surprise, a lot of little boys and girls were the only available coolies,—here you see small children struggling up the hill with big trunks on their backs. This is a most quaint and unexpected place. The town is built on the steep hillside; it commands a fine view of Kinchinjunga, but the great mountain is nearly always enveloped in cloud; you may stay for days at Darjiling without getting a sight of it, save perhaps a shadowy, mystical peak in mid-heaven. Looking across the mist-veiled valley towards the snows, sometimes the whole scene is like a gigantic opal; the faint-flushed peaks, high in the sky, hardly pierce the amethystine, dream-like haze which clings continuously about the mountains—such a wonderful, delicate blue mist, transparent yet impenetrable. Like the crest of some great ethereal wave, the snows gleam in the sea of blue mist and sky, the prosaic mountain base is all hidden, and Chopin-esque illusion fills the world.

I should like to see those pearly mists inter-penetrated with moonshine, while the burning silver peaks above them shone like white fire—you could get such an effect with an Indian moon; the rose-fires and ardours of Dawn on the white peaks are all very well, I daresay, but surely when the mystical lily of night sheds her petals on the snows their dazzling pallor is fairer, in every sense of the word. I fear my phrases smack of the Bodley Head. Pardon me!

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I did want to see the snowy range in all its radiance, the whole elephant at once—so to speak, the magnificent white elephant! even for a single moment; but the exquisite, irritating mists veiled Kinchinjunga in an eternal cloud, as surely as any Rampore chuddah could veil a lovely Ranee.

At last, one morning early, the mists lifted. I sprang, in simple attire, out on to the verandah and beheld, across a dark sea of rolling hill and valley, the Snows, the great white Kinchinjunga in all its massive, intricate beauty, its foam-bright burnished peaks glittering with the gold of sunrise. I thought it looked rather like a big tooth—say, the tooth of the giant Atlas—stopped with gold.

DARJILING The exquisite pallor of the mountain tints is quite arrestive, the clear whiteness of the snow is so delicately defined on the intensely soft blue sky ; all the colours are transparent, and extremely in the style of Pierre Loti or the " Siegfried Idyll." The landscape is truly April-coloured in this month of April. Darjiling itself is not exciting. It is prim and neat and English, with a Mall, and a Bandstand, and a row of inferior shops. The town is well decorated with fir-trees and deodars ; it is really a pretty little place, and looks prettiest at night, with its spangle of lamps gleaming like gigantic fire-flies on the dark hill-side. There is no such thing as a carriage in Darjiling. You must ride a sturdy little hill pony, or go in a rickshaw drawn by three fantastic blackguards, or go in a dandy carried on the shoulders of the same ; or you can walk, though no self-respecting person is supposed to walk in India. The deodars and rickshaws are pleasantly redolent of *Plain Tales* ; indeed, Rudyard haunts India. When I visited the Benares temples, I could think of nothing but "The Incarnation of Krishna Mulvaney" ; in the old town of Amber I saw the "Cold Lairs" of the *Jungle Book* ; while the Burmese Pagoda in the Eden Gardens,

to me, breathed of Supi-yaw-lat (prettiest of DARJILING
names !) and the "Road to Mandalay."

I was too early to see the Anglo-Indians in full swing at Darjiling—they don't come up so soon as April ; but here and there I met a merry grass-widow strolling about with the man in possession, if you will permit the phrase, and there was a sprinkling of tea-planters from the surrounding hills. I saw quite enough of the visitors to form an opinion upon them. The insensibility of these people to their unique surroundings impressed me deeply. They just went up and down their absurd little switchback of convention and insipid social life as if the stupendous Himalaya were a suburban golf-ground ; they said the journey up the mountain was "tedious," and the Darjiling Bandstand was the only thing in the landscape they considered worthy of note. A feeble, futile folk their women seemed, eternally chattering of babies and ayahs and such sordid details of mundane life. These Anglo-Indian women are all alike—such a stereotyped, conventional brand. I always know just what they are going to say before they open their mouths—they have a positive genius for the Expected. I used to read painfully "clever "

DARJILING Mr. Henry James as a kind of counter-irritant to
(April) their conversation.

You are forced to herd with these people—by the rainy weather, you have to spend so much time indoors; for a storm is an almost daily occurrence in Darjiling. After a shower, you see the white clouds like a mockery of the snows curling round the mountains, ever changing, ever moving; at such a time you walk in damp cloud-land, like the gods of the “Rheingold” (but the rainbow doesn’t lead to Valhalla: it leads into Thibet), and every fir needle holds a malicious diamond to drop on your head as you pass.

There are many charming rides and walks about Darjiling, mountain roads redolent of moss and ferns and cedar and fir, where you can stand and meditate on the Back of Beyond stretching superbly at your feet. But here on the roof of the world it is very cold, and you have to walk briskly. The beauty of the Himalayan scenery (forgive reiteration!) is stupendous. It simply sets you agape, like an unblasé child at the pantomime for the first time. Switzerland is a mere nothing compared with this; the grandeur and variety and vastness of mountain and valley are not more remarkable than their exquisite con-

tours and angles ; the landscape is so " pretty " ! DARJILING
Mere magnitude is little (Bedad !), but loveliness
and infinity combined make something worth
looking at. And here you have them perfectly
combined. This Himalayan scenery dwarfs every-
thing else ; all the little towns and cantonments
upon the hills look like toys, so tiny and futile
and inadequate—absurd little dolls' houses !
One's Ego is the only thing the Himalaya does
not dwarf.

The little touches of local colour along the road itself are interesting. Now and then you meet Lamas (I always get so confused between llamas and Lamas) in their dusky, dingy red gowns and sheepskin caps ; I have seen one or two with refined, reserved faces, looking as if their meditations on the jewel in the lotus had materially affected them. By the way, the Buddhist temple in the neighbourhood is rather disappointing ; it is a little white shrine in a hollow of blue hills, a temple with a gilded pinnacle, and four large flags, prayers, are arranged neatly about it ; but it is hardly so important as one would have expected it to be. This must be an excellent country for Buddhistic meditation ; I could turn a prayer-wheel and

DARJILING meditate on the Lord Buddha for hours, sitting
(April) on the hillside, with my eyes fixed on the immortal mountain.

Oh! thou jewel in the Lotus, Oh!

Here and there one sees fluttering scraps of paper affixed to a string stretched across a narrow gorge ; these are esoteric communications, I suppose ; we are not far from Thibet.

As you walk, sometimes you meet wooden carts drawn by pleasant black bullocks, and you encounter wonderful people, whose general appearance leads you to think you are in Mongolia, at least. Yet you hear irritatingly familiar birds among the mountains. I heard a cuckoo, an unblushing cuckoo, fluting somewhere in the velvet darkness of a fir forest ; an eagle, suspended in mid-air over a khud, and a certain purple bird were the only unknown fowls I saw on my hill wanderings.

These country roads are rather bewildering in their cosmopolitan (so to speak) vegetation ; here you see the silver birch and the fir and the common or garden bracken growing amicably beside the bamboo and the tropical tree-fern, as you follow unimaginable paths among the hills, paths that wind and twist up and down through

beautiful woods and wild ravines; you hear the DARJILING hot-weather bird and the cuckoo singing a duet; you see the familiar red-tawny squirrel and a wonderful, dazzling purple bird of the Himalayas. Surely Heine's pine-tree (you know the song of the lonely pine?) might have got an introduction to that palm-tree here on the roof of the world!

I believe there are many bears among these mountains, and I was dying to see one, from a respectful distance—to see a brown bear shuffling down the khud. But it seems the bears have as great a prejudice against the railway as Mr. Ruskin used to have, and they rarely leave their fastnesses—in this civilised, railroaded part of the Himalaya.

In the Terai at the foot of the hills, men say, or rather guide-books say, that there are wild elephants and rhinoceri, and tigers and leopards and panthers—and Heaven knows what! But rhinoceri are sadly coy, and not one showed itself as my train passed, though I scanned the tangled jungle eagerly for such.

You can buy wonderful skins and furs at Darjiling; the box-wallahs bring round tiger skins and snow-leopard skins and sables, and all sorts of furs of beasts found in the Himalaya, as

DARJILING well as shawls and trinkets. Darjiling is rich in
(April) globe-trotters' treasures.

In a certain curio-shop I saw most interesting things: a carved, antique brass helmet from Thibet, which had once graced the head of a superlatively holy Lama—a unique curiosity; silver prayer-wheels from Lhassa (to be turned ever to the left; if you turn them to the right you're swearing), that must revolve to the chanted "Om mani padmi Om"; and, most especially, a ghastly and romantic relic in the form of a tom-tom made of two neatly halved skulls.

It seems they have an unsympathetic custom, in Thibet, of stoning those who have loved indiscreetly, and, as a further punishment, the skulls of Tristan and Isolde are placed back to back and thus made into a tom-tom (of course, a little carving and fitting is necessary),—surely the most hideous musical instrument in the world. Shade of Wagner! The thought of it all must keep the more æsthetic Thibetans straight.

Another quaint thing I saw in the curio-shop was a tiny clay image of a god, manufactured out of the ashes of a holy Lama—the concentrated essence of Lama. Among the more frivolous

gewgaws were charms and amulets innumerable,—these people are very superstitious,—little turquoise and malachite trinkets of bizarre and graceful shapes, coral and gold chains, and tiny silver Buddhas, crystal Buddhas, and Buddhas in bronze.

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(April)

But the place for seeing these curious charms and jewels in profusion and perfection is the weekly fair held in Darjiling Bazar. All the people from the surrounding hills come in to this fair, and they and their adornments are well worth seeing.

Accordingly, on Sunday, I descended the steep hill into the Bazar. The whole place was thronged with extraordinary people of Mongolian type,—such people as I should expect to meet on the Russian Steppes rather than on the Himalayas. They nearly all wore pigtails and gay, fantastic boots of striped blue and red and white; and their complexions ranged, by delicate gradations, from old ivory to old oak; their dress was most picturesque in its varied style and colour. They were more like cheerful nightmares than sober realities. Their weird women were covered with jewellery—turquoise and coral, silver and gold; and, like their more

DARJILING civilised sisters, these did not disdain the aid of art to enhance their peculiar—oh, very peculiar!—charms. I saw one attractive young woman—she evidently considered herself a beauty—whose face was elaborately decorated with dots of brown paint, intended to represent freckles; her coal-black hair was beautifully oiled and plaited into two smooth pigtails; her jewels were many and fantastic; her boots were striped with crimson and green; and altogether she was a most charming person.

The effect of the whole Bazar was that of a symphony of harmoniously subdued colours—rich but rarely brilliant—and grotesque, fancifully ugly forms and faces. By studying these people's dress, I learnt the origin of the "Russian blouse." For every man had a superfluous bit of tunic looped over his belt in front, and the pouch thus formed he used as a pocket. The women were similarly equipped. There is very little difference between a man's and a woman's dress in these parts, and they both do their hair the same way—the Bhootheas at least; they plait it into one or two neat pigtails, and fasten in a silken tassel at the end of all.

The Bhootheas really look quite delightful with

their striped, fantastic boots, and their pigtails, DARJILING
and their huge turquoise earrings and charms,
(April)
their Russian blouses, and their leather belts, and
above all, their Mongol features, which set the
fancy roaming across the mountains into Thibet
and Siberia, and Heaven knows where!

It seems almost incredible that such a people
as this should be found within 300 miles of
Calcutta.

In the sunlit market-place at Darjiling I saw
a Lama in a dusky red gown squatting by a
curious home-made sort of picture of Buddha ;
and on this man's face lay the shadow of the
Himalaya, a something which had troubled me
vaguely, the thing which makes Esoteric Buddhists
of prosaic persons. I can understand the power
that Mysticism exerts over the imagination in the
Himalaya. For the Himalaya enlarges your
credulity ; nothing could be more wonderful or
seemingly more 'impossible than this Himalaya !
Those ghostly opalescent mists might be the
ethereal essence of Maeterlinck ; those pallid,
deathless snows might be Buddha's self material-
ised ; the dreamy, sensuous charm of the lotus
here breathes of meditation ; in this rarefied air
Death and Life do not seem quite so set and

DARJILING conventional,—they are blent rather into a kind of
(April) hermaphroditical state, so to speak.

Now there is a certain piece of music (Music is the chosen vessel of Mysticism) which seems to express perfectly this Himalayan glamour. Indeed, Buddha, Schumann's Fantasie in C, and the Himalaya are interchangeable terms; the same informing spirit created all three. Of course, it needs a genius to carve smooth-sculptured Buddha out of the mutable music, to transform him into sound, to build him of ivory and crystal tones. Alas! Nirvanic geniuses are rare. Yet Buddha dwells surely in the last bars of the first part of that Fantasie.

The Hill peoples, happily, are practical and stolid. Otherwise, in this marvellous, romantic country, they would develop into impossible geniuses or raving lunatics, as the case might be. There seems to be a special protective grant of mild idiocy to the mountaineer. Only the Lamas seem touched by the awful beauty and mystery of the Himalaya. Some of these have the strange, spiritual, fateful look of the seer or the organ-grinder's monkey. And more especially this my friend of Darjiling market-place. He seemed absolutely indifferent to the surging throng of his

countrymen and curious foreigners; he *seemed* DARJILING
indifferent to the small coins that the pious had
(April)
cast at the feet of the pictured Buddha—a
grotesque, pathetic Buddha, dark with age, the
painted petals of his lotus were faded and indis-
tinct. He had suffered too much from mountain
dews and mists on his wonderful journey from
Lhassa. Surely he came from Lhassa!

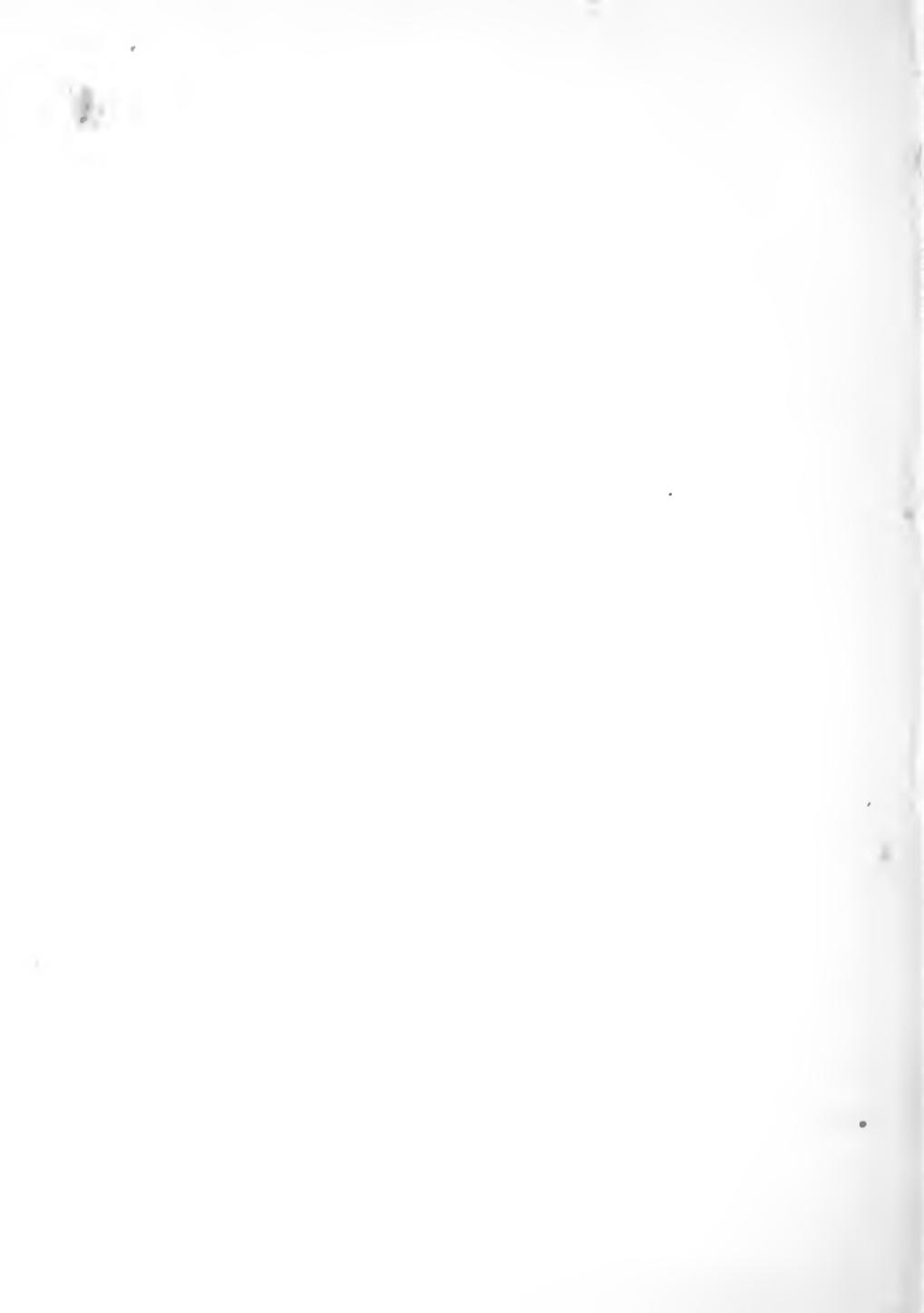
Do you know, I nearly went into a Lamasery at
Lhassa? Lhassa the mystic, unknown shrine of
Buddhism, far in Thibet.

That Sunday fair was my last Darjiling im-
pression. I departed that same morning, and
retraced that marvellous Himalayan journey.

Dark clouds veiled the hills, and it poured with
rain nearly the whole way down, a thunderstorm
hung over the mountains like a pall; but the
Terai was clear. I thought I saw a far, faint
rhinoceros, like a lost illusion, wallowing in the
waters of the river Teesta at the foot of the hills.
And my soul was satisfied.



. . . . MUSIC
. . . . IN INDIA
(A LETTER TO MY
. LATE EDITOR)



THE hardened journalist, I take it, fears neither editor nor reader. And having recently spent a winter in India, up country, I feel tremulously competent to write an account of Music in India.

The subject is a pleasant one to deal with, inasmuch as it opens out wide fields for conjecture, and is singularly destitute of cloying fact, that sordid check on the essayist's pen. The ideal essay, what is it? An incoherent tapestry of random thoughts—not a truthful treatise on a given subject. Music in India is vaguely entrancing, as a Philistine's conception of the story of the "Rheingold," or the programme books of the Philharmonic Society's Concerts.

I will tell you of the weird, droning pipe of the serpent charmer—to which dances the hooded cobra as dance the ragamuffins in the street to the bagpipes of the itinerant Scotsman; I will tell you of the unholy, discordant brass instruments, like wild travesties of those of our beloved German bands—that grace wedding festivities in the marriage month; I will describe to you the elaborate symphonic music of the tom-tom, with its glorious, majestic monotony of beauty, subtle and fiery and iconoclastic as the immortal love

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duet of Tristan and Isolde; I will draw perfectly inaccurate parallels between the Venusberg and the Nautch; I will quote whole pages of Sir Edwin Arnold—if your patience lasts. Oh, the delicious, caressing little chink of the silver anklets!—but a truce! Indeed, I am the sort of man who starts for Paris on a Monday.

I can tell you all this and more, for I have driven through the rainbow, tortuous streets of the endless Bombay Bazars, with their strange painted, carven houses that overhang the roadway, clasping the sky to a narrow strip of burning blue, and thus moderating the infernal sun. And so driving, I have heard the hum and chatter of the “bunnias,” the hoarse cry of the hawker of wares, the sonorous call to prayer from the hot, white, blinding mosque; in short, I have heard all the things that Mr. Robert Hichens would be likely to hear.

I have leaned my ear to the magic wail of the nocturnal jackal, what time the wondrous tropic moon has turned the earth to silver; I have cursed the ceaseless caw of the ubiquitous crow at dawn—that splendid Eastern dawn which “comes up like thunder, outer China, ‘crost the Bay,” in amber and scarlet and gold, like a

viceroy ; and last, but not least, I have heard the Maharajah of Kapurthala sing “Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay !” But that was not in India itself; it was in the Red Sea, I think. I chanced to travel by the same P. & O. boat as His Highness. He really sang it very well, and his majestic bodyguard of Sikhs joining in the chorus, with Oriental solemnity, was an imposing sight which will dwell long in my memory.

Only, I have not heard the bulbul singing to the rose before the white wonder of the Taj Mahal.

I fear me that it is not only in India that the voice of the jackal is heard oftener than the voice of the bulbul.

Yet the natives of India are not unmusical. They attain great proficiency of execution on the tom-tom and other instruments partaking of the nature of the gong; besides, the weirdest wind instruments and the hollow gourd-like rattle; besides, the silver-stringed vina that the henna-stained, rose-leaf fingers of the “purdah-nashin” caress to the accompaniment, I suppose, of some wicked, witty song of Hafiz, that poet who seems to be a kind of Persian Heine.

The native has, likewise, the truly Oriental

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gift of improvisation. The women working in the fields will often keep up a curious nasal drone in a minor key on any theme suggested by the moment. This chant is horribly monotonous, but not altogether unmusical; in truth, it holds Wagnerian possibilities, inasmuch as it lives by *leit-motifs*.

But leaving the native, and passing to the European, we find the latter inordinately unmusical (in India). Why, there is hardly a decent piano in the peninsula; and, as the piano's heart is the favourite resting-place of large yellow frogs, snakes, lizards, and other interesting peculiarities of the country, this is hardly to be wondered at. During the rainy season every piano on the plains goes to rack and ruin, and a violin won't live a day in the fern-case atmosphere of September and October. In the Hill country things are, of course, better; but somehow the musical spirit is lacking in the Anglo-Indian. He is deplorably uncultured; he knows (and, alas! cares) more about polo than about "Parsifal," and I doubt if he has ever even heard of Bayreuth.

Could man be more benighted?

I crave your indulgence for forcing this sad state of affairs on your notice; but this uncom-

promising realism, this literary cat's-meat—so to speak—is much in vogue at present. And why, indeed, should we seek to gloss over facts?

"Nature is often hidden, sometimes overcome, seldom extinguished,"—this forces itself unpleasantly on our consciousness when we are most successful in Art.

It is better to tell the plain, sad truth at once. Our modern essayists have grasped this fact, and they are sweetly instructive; but as "raconteurs" they fail comparatively; though rich in imagination, they are fettered with the relentless fetters of common-sense, the defect that no diction, however sweet and subtle, may soften.

To return to the subject of "Music in India," I fear the average Anglo-Indian would turn a deaf ear to Chopin, Tchaikovsky, or Wagner himself; while, on the other hand, the voice of Mr. Dan Leno would fall most musically on the Anglo-Indian ear, which should flap sympathetically indeed to the tones of such an Orpheus.

I spent some four months in India, and I never heard a note of decent music all the time. Once, Heaven help me! I went to hear a comic opera—"Paul Jones," I think—at the Bombay Theatre, and as a performance it was quite unique. The

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tenor (is there a tenor in "Paul Jones"?) saw fit, for some reason or other, to substitute "In Old Madrid" for his principal solo, and we were all quite satisfied. Indeed, it was too hot to protest. Your Anglo-Indian has the saving grace of enervated languor to counteract his proverbial irritability.

I wonder when they will be performing "Tristan" in Bombay. His emotions would hardly suit the climate. Imagine the long-drawn agony of Tristan with the thermometer at 95° in the dark!

Music is hardly suited to a tropical climate—at least, harrowing or intellectual music. One could, perhaps, listen to Saint-Saëns, and some of Chopin, and such sensuous, tropical music, in India, but I shouldn't care to hear Tchaikovsky's "Pathetic Symphony" there, and a Brahms Symphony would feel like one of the Maharajah's elephants transcribed into sound, with the conductor for mahout. Indeed—now I think of it—the analogy between an orchestra with conductor and an elephant with mahout is a striking one. The Philharmonic Orchestra, for instance, has much in common with the pachydermatous beast, and its distinguished conductor is wont to

sit on (at) its head in approved mahout fashion ; MUSIC IN
—were the mahout to stand, he would, perchance, INDIA
fall off. (A Letter to
my late
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Pardon this inconvenient jesting !

Music-in-India is an empty word, and I have
been forced to fill it up somehow.



. . . VENICE
AND BUDAPEST



A LAS! Venice is a catchword.

When you tread the stones of Venice, they actually melt and resolve themselves into glowing prose; when you lounge in a gondola, the lazy splash of the water sighs of half a hundred "Gondolieras," and the Grand Canal looks a little incomplete without its gilt frame. The curse of the catchword, which spoils so many beautiful works of Art and of Nature,—such as Chopin, the Taj, and Shakespeare,—has descended on Venice.

The catchword is a terrible calamity. When things and persons become catchwords, they lose all their fascination and their glamour,—the bloom is off the peach, all subtlety deserts the catch-word. I hardly think that Cleopatra would fascinate any one of us; I am sure I should not look twice at Helen.

To be a catchword is the great penalty of Fame. Yet though all the gracious robes of illusion and mystery slip off the catchword, some few catchwords sustain the loss gallantly—

"No beauty doth she miss
When all her robes are on:
But Beauty's self she is—
When all her robes are gone."

And Venice is even such an one.

VENICE AND Now the gondola is graceful and undulatory,
BUDAPEST but why, oh! why? is it black? Thus mused
(May)

I, when I arrived at the Quay of the railway station. On a dull day, in a dark gondola, you feel as if you were being ferried down the Styx, and all the harmless tourists under way take on the semblance of lost spirits, even old ladies, even your aunts. Charon is supple and agile; he guides the gondola in a nerve-destroying manner; we scrape old lichenized corners that would ravish the heart of a stone-lover; we just graze the side of a barge and bump the tall coloured masts that deck the water-way, and we never upset. On the quays, dark-eyed, adorable Venetians with nut-brown curls,—some few with real Venetian-red hair,—are admirably grouped; picturesque blackguards are selling great bunches of red and yellow roses and syringa, and all is peaceful and delightful, by reason of the absence of cobble-stones. The lazy splash of the sleepy tide in the canals is much more conducive to all harmony than the rattling of wheels and the clatter of hoofs; the ear is at rest in Venice, save for the shouts of the gondolier, and the clang of bells that reverberates continually across the green water, musically, sonorously.

VENICE AND
BUDAPEST
(*May*)

In sunny Venetian weather the town looks charming ; under a transparent, vivid blue sky the canals sparkle and glitter green and salt ; the many-tinted, tall houses stretch in a continuous architectural mosaic ; and the black, slim gondolas swim up and down like strange sea-birds. Venice in May is at its best ; it radiates Italian brightness, it embodies light-hearted Italy. Only a few of the mediæval houses frown ; up a narrow, remote canal, shaded deep from the glare of day, sometimes one sees a shadow of the past mingling with the actual shadow, and that is quite a relief. It shows you, for a moment, the mystical, fateful Italy you read of in books and pictures ; it recalls Dante, and the cypress-tree, and Francesca, and La Gioconda ; and also Dante Gabriel Rossetti, whose sonnets glow like the Italian Spring.

Some of these narrow, tortuous lanes, with their many-storeyed, green-shuttered houses, suggest an Eastern city, and the strips of intense blue sky that roof these dark, cool ways accent the impression.

During my stay at Venice I saw as little as I reasonably could. I detest picture-galleries. Pictures bore me. I appreciate Watts and Burne Jones, and also Aubrey Beardsley, but

VENICE AND Titian and Veronese and Tintoretto I find too
BUDAPEST like the backs of blotting-books ; Leonardo and
(May)

Botticelli I can endure with enthusiasm. The dowdy tourists "doing" the pictures interest me more than the immortal paint ; the former look so patient and so virtuous and so uncomprehending as they wrestle with their catalogue and contemplate Bacchus and Ariadne with a gentle reverence befitting the High Altar. Why is it that the most aggressive Philistines positively like spending hours among old pictures, while they cannot sit through a Bach concerto ?

I did go to see St. Mark's. And I found it to be an exquisite and magnificent piece of bric-a-brac ; its astonishing wealth of frescoes and sculptures, marbles, and what not, give it just a suspicion of the Pagoda ; no two of its pillars and carvings are alike, its winged lion alone suffers reproduction ; and oh, what a relief to the eye to see him repeated ! to the eye versed in the symmetrical, symphonic architecture of Mahomet. St. Mark's surpassing beauty, to me suggests a Titanic piece of rare Venetian glass ; it has the effect of a rich fragility, a dazzling costliness ; quite Oriental in design, it has an Oriental splendour of detail,—one might say St.

Mark's is a little overdone in the matter of VENICE AND
ornament. As Ruskin's prose is to Pater's, so BUDAPEST
is San Marco to the Moti Musjid at Agra, the
Pearl Mosque.

Is it really too late to criticise St. Mark's?

I like St. Mark's Square and the cooing, fluttering pigeons with their iridescent necks and their rose-jacynth claws. I like that square because you can walk there, for I infinitely prefer my feet to a gondola. Yet it is pleasant enough, in warm weather, to lounge in a gondola up and down the Grand Canal, between the old Venetian palaces that have wasted their youth in apeing Narcissus, and to watch the traffic on the water-way, where steamers are 'buses, and barges are Carter Paterson, and gondolas are cabs and carriages, where the Rialto is Piccadilly Circus, and St. Mark's Square is the Marble Arch, where graceful gondoliers are cabmen!

The Grand Canal is most charming at night. Indeed, Venice is at its best from 8 to 11 p.m. Then the Canal is a-glitter with mystic barges (not quite like the fabled barge of Arthur), sporting gay Chinese lanterns and bands of very inferior musicians, and possessing the attractive powers of the Pied Piper, since a cloud of dark

VENICE AND gondolas glides in the wake of each ; the long
BUDAPEST black boats with their gleaming, raised steel
(May) prows look like a fleet of listening sea-serpents.

The musicians float and make music the whole length of the Grand Canal. Their songs sound strangely sweet and dreamy as they ring fitfully over the water. Any song on the water sounds as luscious as a Ghazal of Hafiz. The water liquefies and prolongs the sound, acts as a resonator, in fact ; also, it eroticises the sentiment in a peculiar way, a charming yet unagonising way. Gondola Music makes you feel nice without distressing you in the least, it charms your physiology without interfering much with your psychology,—that delicious, devil-may-care song and chorus that you don't understand a word of, and understand perfectly.

The frivolous, tinkling music of guitars and mandolines and light - minded fiddles ripples sweetly as the lapping water,—it seems so spontaneous and confident, and so lacking in all the elements of real self-conscious beauty.

It is not enough to sing as the birds sing ; you want an *arrière pensée*, an undercurrent of feeling in your song ; gay music is not strong enough to excite the nerves,—and unless music

excites my nerves I don't care for it. Which is VENICE AND
shocking, but true!

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I know I grumble a good deal, but then I carefully cultivate my grumbling instincts. A capacity for grumbling shows an imaginative disposition. For the grumbler is an idealist who has always before his subconscious mental eyes what might be, what should be—an improbable perfection; he unconsciously contrasts this with what actually is, and the result is—his grumbling.

Having just come off a voyage, I was soon a-weary of Venice and gondolas; I found I preferred inland scenery. Venice is not rich in trees, and there one cannot admire the Italian spring:—the wind waving the velvet corn, the olives shivering from green to silver-grey, the glowing patches of crimson clover, the orange-trees, the lemon-trees, the slim, sombre cypresses, the aloes and the scarlet poppies, the mules and the white bullocks and the poplar groves, the rich, soft green landscape, the luxurious blue sky and the beautiful clouds, the vitality and freshness of trees and crops and flowers,—this all reads like a Bill of Fare in a Duval, I know,—and, truly, you drink the beauty of the land like

VENICE AND wine when you come from the arid East. The
BUDAPEST Italian landscape is curiously unreal, romantic,
(May)

and conventional ; it looks as if it had been designed for the background or foreground of a pre-Raphaelite picture, as if it were meant to frame a woman with the sombre grace of a cypress, or a pilgrim of Love with the inevitable lantern jaws, mane of dusty gold, delicious little droop of the lower lip, and wearily dissipated air.

When I was tired of Italy I crossed the mountains into Austria. I saw the Semmering Alps pleasantly enough out of one eye, a grit from the engine having obscured the other ; rifts of snow were lingering on the far grey peaks, but the lower slopes were delicately aflush with the spring,—apple-blossom, pear-blossom, ripe cherries, lush grass, and wild flowers. I stayed at a little hamlet in the Austrian Tyrol, where they couldn't speak a word of English, and “Cleanliness is a Virtue” was the legend nailed across my washstand ; where there was a hydro-pathic establishment of sorts, labelled “ Hotel for Elephants.” I didn't quite understand the necessity for such an hotel, as I considered that such visitors must be rare in the Tyrol, but one

day I saw a very large lady wandering in—and VENICE AND
my intuitive mind grasped the situation.

BUDAPEST
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Then I went on to Vienna; which is a city I like, it is so expensive and bright and smart. I heard the "Walkiire" in the splendid "Ring" Opera House, and I was relieved to feel my hysterical faculties quite unimpaired by my long sojourn outside the pale of Civilisation. The sight of a real conductor with long hair and a pince-nez and an excruciated expression filled my heart with joy, Wotan's comprehensive explanations hardly bored me, while the "Lenzlied"—!

Then I went on to Budapest. It surprised me greatly. I expected a semibarbaric, primitive old Hungarian city,—the sort of place where you could go about all day in flannels,—and I found an ultra-civilised town, built on the most modern principles and bristling with splendid shops—smarter than those in Vienna almost. The discovery did not please me. I prefer the semi-barbaric.

I first saw Budapest under very favourable circumstances, namely, a sunset which was a symphony in flame and orange and amber, deepening into a fiery rose colour; the Danube and the old town of Buda on the hill looked

VENICE AND charming. Pesth on the opposite bank boasts too
BUDAPEST many factory chimneys to lend itself kindly to
(May) sunsets.

Where was the old Magyar capital I had come to see? I only found a wonderful place for gewgaws and trinkets and clothes and hats; every second shop is a milliner's—the sort of place that Virginia or Sapphira might "do" for the "Lady's Inanity."

Occasionally, among the smart crowds of tailor-made women—beautiful Hungarian figures with all the feminine lines accentuated—you meet a peasant with her head tied up in a bright silken kerchief, wearing a very short striped petticoat visibly supported by scarlet stockings, or none. This accords more with your idea of the Marishka of the Magyar Folksongs.

Budapest is very far advanced in civilisation. It is quite a Woman's town. Its politeness is excruciating. The Lion of Hungary on all the public buildings looks a courtly beast, and all officials nearly dislocate themselves in bowing to each other. I confess I don't admire such painful courtesy; my own manners leave almost everything to be desired, and it bores me to

have to exchange a salutation with everyone I VENICE AND
meet.

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I visited Margaret's Island in the Danube, a nice green island clasped by silver stretches of river, and there I saw the Hungarians in their Sunday clothes,—they are always in their Sunday clothes,—and heard the native bands. It was very pleasant under the trees among the pretty Magyars, their apple-blossom faces crowned by bewildering Budapest hats, their soft, irritating chatter just delicately blurring the mad, mysterious music.

The view of Budapest from the river was splendid; hilly Buda on the west bank, Parisian Pesth on the east. Buda is a pretty town, full of trees and fortresses and palaces. In spite of my violent aversion to public buildings, I was taken to see the Stefanskirche on the top of Buda hill. This is a curious Moorish-looking old Church, with painted pillars, wherein one feels uncertain whether to bow to the Altar or to turn towards Mecca.

Then I had to see the view from the hill-crest. All big towns, from a height, look much alike, but Pesth is individually striking by its magnificent river and its numerous chimneys (it has so

VENICE AND much river and chimney) while Buda is remarkable for its precipitous hills.
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From Budapest I took the Orient Express to Paris, and, prompted by a sense of the fitness of things, I spent my first evening in that city with *Le Contrôleur des Wagon-Lits*. The naïveté of the title took my fancy. What else could the plot be?

In duty bound, I went to see the Salon, at least I ran round it, and it seemed to me that the Salon, as usual, was admirably adapted to encourage artists,—whether or no it encourages Art, I am hardly competent to say.

Paris, of course, was looking her best, all a-bloom with creamy chestnuts. Beauty in the Bois was scarcely so thick-powdered as usual, by reason of the searching daylight. The Rue de la Paix surpassed itself in those exquisite gewgaws that nobody buys; and the cats of the Latin Quarter blinked green eyes on sunny door-steps.

Then I went on to Bayreuth—in London.

I sought my stall—well knoweth the ass his Master's crib on a Wagner day—at 5 p.m.; 'twas a lovely afternoon. The House gloomed “crimson and sombre as a relentless passion” (to quote

Gabriele D'Annunzio's transcription of Grieg's VENICE AND "Erotik"). At last, Felix Mottl rose out of the dark orchestra, as Aphrodite from the sea. Splendid Felix Mottl! His music made me feel like a zebra, a musical amateur, and Siegfried the Volsung rolled into one.

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How joyously uncouth, how like a Newfoundland pup was polished Jean de Reszke! Had I seen Siegfried hoeing turnips, I should not have been surprised.

I looked round on the musical critics in my vicinity,—what an absurd lack of profile was theirs! I heard the bewitching wood-music,—straightway I was lost in a forest of dream. For am I not a Wagnerotomaniac?



A HUNGARIAN
. . RHAPSODY



BARBARISM and Decadence meet in this Hungarian music. Such strenuous, disturbing music, full of verve and spirit and ferocity; music which blazes up like a furnace to the wind of the players' changeful emotion, rises and sinks with a spontaneity that civilisation knows nothing of,—music so *Æolian*, occult, and thrilling that it gives you indigestion as you sit at your supper-table in the Hotel Hungaria listening to it.

It was in May that first I heard it, when the spring fever was in the violin strings,—notes of liquid fire pulsed and danced languorously, exquisitely, ecstatically, in rhythms graceful as a seagull or a swallow, graceful as Paderewski's rhythms, which they much resembled. Oh, the ease and wildness, and the coquetry of the playing! It was so deliciously feminine, feminine as a man alone can be, dainty as a Persian kitten, petulant as a critic, mad as a musth elephant. The leader improvised on his fiddle, and the band supported him with wonderful harmonies, full of the melancholy born of great tracts of level land, and alive with curious possibilities,—runs like the wind wandering over desolate places, chords like a sea-tide breaking fitfully on a wild shore, like the waves splashing

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across your cabin port as you lie in your wofeul
berth, like the splash of the suds on Washing
Day, like the wail of the Lost on Judgment Day.

This Magyar music acts almost exclusively on
the nerves, just as French and Italian music
appeals to the senses ; it is so violent and excit-
ing and masterful that it is like a powerful drug ;
the fierce, ecstatic swing of the rhythm positively
makes your brain reel in concert, as you sit
drinking alternate Bocks and Cafés—the only
justifiable means of retaining your seat in the
hall where the Hungarian Band plays.

Of course, there is a good deal of humbug
about the whole thing. These Hungarians have
an admirable capacity for good musical fooling,
somewhat akin to the exquisite musical fooling
of Grieg ; they will take a worthless little phrase
and play it with such confidence, verve, and
dramatic intensity that you feel it is the music
of the spheres, and recognise winds and waters
and also all the stock-in-trade of psychology in it.
With these Hungarians, as with all true artists,
the manner is everything and the matter almost
nothing. Their rhythms are their chief charm.

Rhythm, I take it, is purely a racial gift.
Among European peoples, Slavs and Magyars

alone attain it. Roughly speaking, did you ever hear a fine rhythm from anyone but a Russian, a Hungarian, or a Pole? For I never did. Spaniards have a certain sense of rhythm, certainly, but it is of a coarser kind. In truth, Rhythm is a barbaric instinct; it does not take kindly to civilisation. The savages who beat the tomtom have a perfect instinct for rhythm. No one could term the Bengali ryot a savage, but he is at least uncivilised,—the cut of his dress-suit admits it,—and I have heard an exquisitely rhythmic solo on the tomtom from the Bengali ryot; indeed, the perfection of his rhythm makes his music a torture.

But the Hungarians have also an exquisite instinct for *tempo-rubato*, which is the fine flower of rhythm; they can play round a rhythm—so to speak—as gracefully as a dolphin plays round a ship.

That delightful and difficult instrument the czimbalo gives the Magyar music its peculiar charm; those Titanic rhapsodies with their screeching Valkyr cadences are much indebted to the czimbalo for their weird, legendary effects, since the czimbalo has a strange, unhallowed beauty akin to kohl-ringed eyes and Edgar Allan Poe, and the secretive smile of Leonardo's

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"Monna Lisa." The czimbalo suggests strange Eastern things; it does not belong at all to the West—I shouldn't think the czimbalo could be played in America,—and it gives its subtle tone to the whole Magyar music.

How comes it that agricultural Hungary, with its geese and its fowls and its stretches of fertile land, should produce such imaginative music as this, which ought to have sprung from the Himalayas at least? Yet I suppose that, really, plains stimulate the imagination more than mountains do, for in a mountainous country the imagination is left idle, the mind has no need of it, everything is wonderful and beautiful, and we rest satisfied with it all; whereas in the plains nothing is as we would have it, and we are forced to fall back on our imagination. And, without doubt, *Sehnsucht*, the most important factor in Music, is a product of the Plains; the level lands of Hungary prove to be as productive of *Sehnsucht* as of geese and corn. There must be something peculiarly stimulating to the musical mind about the plains, for all the wildest and most wistful music comes from the plains. Where will you find two flatter countries than Hungary and Poland? —if you keep clear of the Carpathians, of course.

After all, I think that there is a very distinct charm about the plains; they afford you most luxurious skies and sunsets, and they have a ravishing monotony of style, a certain ascetic attractiveness—which Mrs. Alice Meynell might appreciate in one of those dainty, thoughtful little cups of literary Liebig which it pleases her to call essays.

Yes!—as I was telling you, they all play “without their music,” and the way those bands keep together (without a conductor, too) is supernatural! They have their little tricks, of course, and every now and then comes a magnificent arpeggio chord which serves the simple purpose of letting all those who have been left behind catch up the main body, for they play their airs somewhat like polo quarters, and the leader (practically) calls “Time!” whenever he thinks it advisable. This is all so insolently naïve that it doesn’t detract a bit from the general effect. Even a musical critic would accept it complacently, if he were sitting in the Hotel Hungaria sipping a Bock and watching all the pretty Hungarians eating innocently “with their knives.” The whole thing is irresistible!

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THE PIANOFORTE
. . . . RECITAL



C RITICS, when dealing with the piano recital, THE PIANO-
are wont to ignore every side of this FORTE
interesting function save the mere musical one—
RECITAL
the actual playing; they ignore every sense save
that of Hearing. Whereas, in truth, the art of
the pianoforte recital is of a distinctly Wag-
nerian type, inasmuch as it appeals more or
less to each sense, embraces the spirit of every
art—subordinating the whole to Music, I grant
you.

Our enjoyment of the recital depends on many
things,—mere trifles you will say,—such as the
lady on our right, the cushion of our stall, the
state of our soul, the fit of our boots, the size
of the hat in front of us;—all these seeming
details are to the full as important as the piano-
playing we have come to hear. And, if I may
be permitted to say so, the personality of our
pianist affects most keenly our appreciation of
his art.

I may hardly express the passionate pleasure
with which an interesting profile inspires me.
Yet Expression is to me easier than Emotion.
Gazing—I am rapt from this discordant century;
a tawny pallor of dream steals over me, I am in
the pre-Raphaelite wonder-world. I can gaze a

THE PIANO- recital through on a sensitive, ardent face, shadowed
FORTE anon by thick waves of tawny or dusky hair, anon
RECITAL tossed back impatiently to bare a poetic brow.

Truly, it is as important to please the eye as to enchant the ear !

This vital fact has long been grasped by the intuitive Southern mind of the organ-grinder, who seeks to enhance the charm of his matchless music by the picturesque form of his fantastically attired monkey. I am ever attracted by the plaintive face of the pensive ape in that gay scarlet jacket which seems but to deepen its wearer's melancholy. For I am intensely sensitive to beauty—spiritual, mental, and musical; beauty commands my undying homage. Beauty is a vital necessity of the pianist's art—I do not mean mere cold correctness of note or feature, but rather the fateful, piteous beauty of the saints of Leonardo or the organ-grinder's monkey.

The pianist's whole art cannot be confined in the crude definition—piano-playing. Our critics dimly apprehend this truth, and, burgeoning forth into passionate platitude, sound all the dictionary's deeps for the *mot juste*—I need scarcely say they fail to find it ; and such terms as virtuosity, expression, etc., applied to ideal pianism glide off

their subject as water off a duck's back. For THE PIANO-
the art of the modern pianist is the revelation of
a unique personality through an inevitable, per-
fect medium. Wherefore this personality is of
paramount importance in both its own esteem
and that of its audience,—and, *profil perdu*, it
is irresistible.

FORTE
RECITAL

Truly, I would rather be a modern pianist
than play Hamlet or edit the *Fin-de-Siècle*. I
can listen to the ideal pianist for a whole
afternoon with tolerable equanimity; though I
possess that delicate, discriminating temperament
which instinctively prefers one perfect sensation
to several perfect sensations, a single flawless
pearl to a string of pearls.

We cannot exhaustively appreciate many
things at a time unless we are gifted with that
catholicity of preference which renders prefer-
ence worthless. Personally, I am never quite
sure if a recital partakes of the nature of thirteen
courses of cold veal—or not! In the case of
the ideal pianist the question of cold veal does
not arise, for he is no mere piano-player; but in
the cases of other pianists—more especially the
gifted pupils of Mme. Schumann—the point has
vexed me sore. Still, the monotony of a recital

THE PIANO appeals to me; for I love monotony, and subjective art is of necessity monotonous. Every strong personality is hopelessly monotonous. We do not quarrel with Mr. Swinburne because he but rarely understudies the moral part of Count Leo Tolstoi,—we do not demand an unprejudiced opinion from a critic. And Art without Personality would be as cold as Philanthropy. I fear that the great charm of monotony is commonly undervalued. Of course, Wagner and all his colleagues have done their best to correct the vulgar error that variety is the salt of life—at anyrate, they have taught us that limitation is the salt of love; but still we find intelligent persons depreciating monotony and applauding the meretricious beauty of change, depreciating personality and crying for versatility.

Besides its ravishing monotony, the piano recital's limitations charm the discriminating soul. The music is limited to one instrument and one interpreter—a kind of limited *édition de luxe* of tone-language. There is something piquantly ascetic in the cool white tones of the piano—cloistral as the eyes of Cléo de Mérode; they can express subtler shades of feeling than all the twopence colouring of the orchestra can

portray; they have, indeed, "the poetic inhu- THE PIANO-
manity of a sonneteer's mistress." They defy FORTE
analysis; they cause the ravished pen to pause RECITAL
spellbound on the verge of adjective, as a green
lucent sea-wave, curling, curving, indolently, de-
liciously,—of a sudden poised on the breathless
brink of tidal thunder, never to break in clouds
of tossing foam and cool, bright spray. And
yet they cause also an acceleration of the pulse,
an indefinable *Sehnsucht*, faint as the pale
gold Rhine wine of the poetic title which one
instinctively links with affairs of the heart. They
are, indeed, the essence of Music, rarefied, inten-
sified—but a truce! Never will we course the
March hare of an Idea to death with the grey-
hound of Fancy.

There is something inexpressibly Pateresque in the pianist's art—in its delicious limitations, which somehow suggest Pater's restricted diction, his limited *édition de luxe* of language (as I said before) and sentiment,—indeed, the limitation which is the salt of love, of which I know no better example than that of the aborigine in Mr. Kipling's story, who knew and used but one word—"Dam!"

Now, perhaps this analogy is a little bit

THE PIANO- strained ; I drew it rather as an expression of
FORTE thought than from innate conviction of its justice.
RECITAL Mine is an extraordinarily supple genius, and I
can but rarely restrain it from turning paradoxical
somersaults. And I hold that verbal virtuosity
is its own excuse,—pardonable as the pyrotech-
nical tone-journalese displayed toward the end of
a recital.

I have attended half as many pianoforte
recitals as the most jaded critic in the world,
and only on rarest occasions have they delighted
me. I think a dull recital is the dullest thing
on earth,—it is the concentrated essence of dul-
ness. Some amiable, self-satisfied mountebank
skipping through his whole bag of tricks from
Bach to Liszt is not an edifying or exhilarating
sight. The bell of the muffin-man in Picca-
dilly, or the hoarse cry of “ Winner ! ” down the
street (time was when to me that cry was as the
voice of Memnon to the Dawn !) is a welcome
diversion from the limpid trickle of tone-in-
anities or the garden-roller-like sound of the
raucous chords. (Truly, to the poor all things
are poor !) And the people who frequent recitals
are usually very painful specimens,—I always
think that Gautier must have had either the

musical amateur or the musical critic in his mind's eye when he penned the line—

E PIANO-
FORTE
RECITAL

“Le plus vilain animal qui soit sur la terre.”

(Though perhaps the amateur is liker a vegetable.) So sensitive am I, that the proximity of an enthusiastic musical amateur with the lamentable instinct of physical applause has power to crush all these delicate, gossamer-like tendrils of my soul which embrace the white flowers of music. Often, during a recital, I have glanced down the hall and seen rows of musical amateurs, touched with a Burne-Jones-like glamour of expectant weariness, looking like rows of turnips swayed by a wind of emotion—perchance toward a carrot on the platform. At such a time the whole world takes on the semblance of a vegetable,—the very tuberoses of Chopin breathe of artichokes—onions! At such a time one can but shut eyes and ears till the mood has passed.



. . . CHESTNUTS
(A STUDY IN IVORY)



"**I**T'S a poor workman as can't leave a job **CHESTNUTS**
for a mate" (so I heard an aggrieved (A Study in
critic or plumber—I forget which—remark);
and I think there is a wide field for comment
left unilled on the hither side of Criticism,
somewhere about *Weissnichtwo*. Here is a little
barren space between professional Knowledge
and unprofessional Indiscrimination, where the
dilettante may sow his folly gladly, and bring
his flowers of fancy—modest violets—to fragrant
imperfection.

And thus I speak without fear.

There is, I think, a subtle fascination about the chestnut in both creamy May and tawny October—even in dark December. For the hackneyed theme has something of the charmed mystery of Immortality, something restful and unchanging as the Suez Canal or the Pole Star. The critic-worn, weary loveliness of the "Chestnut" draws us irresistibly with a single split hair—of liquid amber, of silken fire.

One thing alone can in some measure rejuvenate the "chestnut." And that is the alchemy of a thoroughly crude opinion upon it. A sufficiently crude treatment will restore almost any subject to something of its pristine freshness, as the gentle

CHESTNUTS dews of unsophisticated Dawn restore the drooping
(A Study in Ivory) flower.

And thus I venture to talk of Paderewski.

Now, every artist has his own instinctive tone-colour with which he informs his art. As you would write of Grieg in silver, and Maeterlinck in chrysophrase, and good Old Omar in ruby, so I would write of Paderewski in ivory, if mere words had colour.

For what delicate carved ivory music has Paderewski wrought us by the magic of his inimitable touch! Gossamer dreams like the wrought marble screens in the Taj, which seem woven of moonfire, passion, and sleeping snow on a "night of frost in May." Smooth, polished, luminous tones, lit from within by a strange white glow—these are veritable *masscuses* of the soul, manipulating its every nerve with the skilled tenderness of the sympathetic psychologist, refining on exquisite shades of emotion, waking the whole keyboard of Feeling with sure, sensitive touches. The mere musician (pardon me!) cannot appreciate these complex luxuries; the romantic hedonist who has had a liaison more or less with each of the arts, "tasting all blossoms and confined to none," can better under-

stand this lyric loveliness. Indeed, Paderewski CHESTNUTS is quite wrongly estimated as a mere musician. (A Study in Ivory)
His art is something far too personal, unique, and subtle ever to be classed or stereotyped. This the critic doesn't grasp. The critic, as an essentially modern product, has the lamentable modern tendency to put the cart before the horse. Given—Paderewski and the piano in juxtaposition, the critic immediately starts at the ultimate end, Music, and thus he gets hold of the wrong end of the stick. He should, of course, begin with Paderewski and the piano, from which many delicious concerts and conceits may be evolved.

For Paderewski is essentially the Genius of the Piano : since the unique charm of the piano is his, and his are the limitations of the piano. Viewed among other pianists, he is like a Chrysanthemum in a bed of Aster,—the petulant, fantastic flower of Japan amid the stolid blooms of China.

I find a strange analogy to his touch in moonlight. For the moon subjects heaven and earth to her own silver sheen, invests all things with her pale mystical glamour,—the moon, in her own far-off, divine way, is quite an egoist, and

CHESTNUTS believes almost exclusively in subjective art. All
(A Study in tone-gradations, of light-shade but not of colour,
Ivory) are hers, from the weird white of winter to the
tawny gold of harvest—ivory spring, amber of
summer—but she is always indisputably the
moon: her lovely monotone of colouring is her
personality.

How different from the vulgar Catholicity of
the universal sun are the exquisite Limitations of
the exclusive moon,—how different, and how
infinitely sweeter! The moon transcends the
sun as Art transcends Nature. The moon is no
more “a reflection of the sun” (as the copybook
tells us) than the Dream is a reflection of the
Real. The sun has no personality at all; he is
deplorably deficient in personal hypnotism, he
conceives of an “object as in itself it really is,”—
and that is unpardonable! The moon is all
temperament and personality, she puts her own
ivory interpretation upon the world.

In these days of the association of Music
and Literature, one instinctively links Paderewski
with Walter Pater,—at least I do. When I am
listening to Paderewski, I await the delicious
note, the peach-bloom phrase, just as I seek
the luxurious word, the delicious phrase in

“Denys L’Auxerrois.” Both tone poet and CHESTNUTS
prose poet (I like hybrid names) have the same (A Study in
leisurely grace of style—the unique charm of Ivory)
repose. Both have that exotic simplicity—that
naturalness which is the result of strenuous art,
a simplicity of black pearls! Both their names
begin with a P., and to neither is the common-
place attainable.

I think that Beethoven and Schumann and Chopin are to Paderewski somewhat as Antony Watteau and Leonardo were to Pater. Yet pause before you contradict me! In so perfectly expressing Watteau, Pater has expressed himself. Watteau is transcribed into words, he breathes, he lives,—that unerring instinct of the unique word *is Pater*, the vital spark of his genius,—none other could have wrought that imaginary portrait with so keen a fidelity.

In like manner, by so perfectly expressing Beethoven or Schumann or Chopin—imaginary portraits all—Paderewski perfectly expresses himself, which after all is his main desire and aim, as it was Pater’s aim to express himself.

Like Pater, Paderewski restricts his (tone) diction somewhat: rejecting all the everyday colloquialisms of piano-playing, he confines him-

CHESTNUTS self to a rarefied essence of tone-speech, whereof
(A Study in Ivory) each syllable is vitally expressive, each note a

pearl wrought by no earthly, no maritime oyster.

But then people with that shade of hair—hair with a sheen of blood in it—are always worth listening to! And he has something of the same limitations of thought and sentiment as Pater; both these “sons of joy” are equally fastidious, though the musician is, as a musician cannot fail to be, perhaps more interested in the heart than in the head. Indeed, sentimentally he rather resembles Dante Rossetti,—his music is strenuous, exotic, and impassioned as Rossetti’s “House of Life,” instinct with the same splendid fatefulness and sombre exultation. I always feel something Slavonic in Rossetti, and something essentially musical, inasmuch as he appeals irresistibly to every sense save the Common. Likewise, Paderewski has Rossetti’s peculiar power of being at the same moment outside and inside. I will explain my cryptic speech. Paderewski has the ubiquitous faculty attaching to us finer souls—that of feeling our art to the core, and being at the same time keenly alive to the impression it is making on others. For instance, I love! And who should love so passionately as I? I purr

that love into a sonnet, and my emotion in CHESTNUTS
nowise obscures my sense of rhyme and rhythm,
(A Study in Ivory)
nor yet does it becloud my instinct of gracious
diction. Were I merely an artist, my sonnet
would lack passion; were I purely a lover, I
might tumble into an error of rhyme.

And then, again, Paderewski's tone-literature
(contra-distinctive to the tone-journalism of which
we get so much) is somewhat in the French Style.
Which French Style? THE French Style. His
marvellously sensitive touch wins secrets from
the vibrating strings as a father-confessor cajoles
the fluttering hearts and tongues of emotional,
sweet sinners; indeed, often his notes have a
double vibration, a *double entente*—the echo
infinitely subtle!

This *double entente* is especially audible in his
interpretation of Chopin. He brings out so well
that Tartar ferocity overlaid with Parisian polish,
that delicate rose-jacynth cruelty faintly flushing
those mystical white dreams—in short, that
“mixture of tiger’s blood and honey” wherein
lies the true *mordente affettuoso*. Moreover, his
Chopin nocturnes have that little exquisite touch
of languor which puts the last seduction on
passion.

CHESTNUTS Chopin is so seldom understood. The very
(A Study in same people who read Heine in the English
Ivory)

translation think that Chopin is a gentle, dreamy sentimentalist. O my prophetic soul ! I have found many analogies to Paderewski, but, in truth, his personality is a quick-change artist. During a recital it will successively and successfully impersonate Beethoven, Brahms, Chopin, Schumann, homogeneising these divers persons with the informing essence of its own delightful self. Now, as I am of a courteous though unoriginal disposition, I think that of all composers Schumann is the most indebted to M. Paderewski. For M. Paderewski's Slavonic traits just counteract Schumann's occasional slight tendencies to Domesticity. And the domestic side of a Romanticist is the side least worth bringing out.

What I chiefly admire in Paderewski's playing is (to avoid reiteration) its refinement of simplicity—a certain delicate naturalness which is very palpably art. This refines Schumann and etherealises Chopin, when it is Chopin's good pleasure to be ethereal, for the tone poet in question usually savours indisputably of this world. And this priceless simplicity is *semplice* as a

field flower, an anemone in a shy spring wood, CHESTNUTS or one of Heine's matchless songs. Now the difficulties of the perfect *semplice* can hardly be overestimated. For he who would put the daffodil into music must give the brilliant delicacy and the delicate brilliancy, the pure glowing amber in its clear perfection, the sun-kissed ivory in its subtle softness—must not deviate a gossamer's breadth from the ascetic loveliness of outline. Simplicity is very hard of attainment,—I never even attempt it !

M. Paderewski has fathomed the irresistible charm of The Naïve — hardest of all arts !

This charming *naïveté* he puts into his dance rhythms, which are peculiarly piquant,—they would set the toes of a ballet of bishops irresistibly a-tapping ! Or even, perchance, toes of an audience of musical amateurs. But what does the public know of rhythm ? It cannot distinguish between pearls and acorns. It cannot appreciate a marvellous mosaic of music, or those infinitesimal, dainty touches that chisel out perfection. Still, it is appreciative of the Beautiful—in its own dull way. Whenever I attend a Paderewski recital, and I look round on the

CHESTNUTS musical amateur-packed hall, I think of Krishna
(A Study in Ivory) and the Milkmaids :—

“ Like white lotus flowers whose root is wounded under the water,
The moonlight of their downcast faces shines with pallid splendour.”

Musical amateurs are always pale.

I fear I have omitted to mention Paderewski's marvellous tone-elocution. His softest *pianissimo*, be it but an infinitesimal sigh, is keenly, purely, perfectly audible. I have felt the “ small, still, sweet spirit of that sound ” penetrate to the utmost arc of the Crystal Palace. Indeed, his *pianissimo* is famous for atmospheric effects. When he has played Rubinstein's “ Barcarolle in A Minor,” have you not seen the moonlight inlaying the odorous music of the weird pinecadence with the flickering ghost of gold? If you haven't, you're hopeless! He is electric as Life.

Splendidly restrained, he is almost never temperate. There is a subtle violence about Paderewski that is quite irresistible, a something untamable that meets its brother in the desert wind and the black panther and the Prelude of “ Tristan,” a something which is deliciously

piquant in the Queen's Hall ; it thrills our jaded CHESTNUTS
selves with a breath of the Primeval and the (A Study in
Ivory)
pre-Raphael and most especially the Oriental,
the supple, the savage, the immortal ! However
civilised you are, it makes your soul rise as a
wave to the West wind, as the hooded cobra to
the pipe of the Charmer.

(A Paderewski recital always reminds me of a great wind passing over the sea ; it stirs up the languid waves of quiet people to a froth and a foam of excitement and a thunder of applause.)

There is no doubt that this playing with (should I say playing to ?) cobras is rather dangerous, and the latter end of the charmer is not hard to predict, it is too intimately connected with the former end of the cobra. Even now the hooded critic shows his fangs, and if the Lords of Life and Death had not drained all critics' poison-bags and filled them up with words, it might go hard with the piper. But then all sane people (and I am one of such) look upon the critic as the deaf adder.

Once I thought that M. Paderewski was about to anticipate the millennium among the critics ; now I fancy he is a little out of fashion, the tawny shade of the " chestnut " overshadows him.

CHESTNUTS But still his geese are swans, by the grace of God
(A Study in Ivory) —and the sanction of the critics? Who cares?

Yet still I admit that Personality has its disadvantages, and that though Limitation is the salt of Love—Variety is its sugar.

. . . IN A TURNIP-FIELD
(ST. MARTIN'S SUMMER)



AS I walk in the sun-dappled woods and IN A TURNIP-
FIELD
(St. Martin's
Summer)
listen to the ceaseless sighing of the wind in the tree-tops, I do not marvel at the wind's melancholy. For beautiful as the country is, it is also depressing—as beautiful things are depressing—in a pleasurable way.

I myself find a turnip-field the most sympathetic scheme of landscape, I cannot tell why! The red-brown earth and the patient, monotonous yet lively green of the turnip-tops inspire me with a sad pleasure. I like my turnip-field to be on high ground, and to have its foliage touching the near horizon; there is even such a turnip-field before me as I write. A single poppy pierces its peaceful colouring.

It is now late afternoon. The day is a sleepy, delicate day of October; the atmosphere is full of softness and distance; the pines are new washed by rain to a paler green than their wont; they are shadowed and pencilled with a hazy blue that might have been distilled from the deliciously subdued sky-tint of ghostly amethyst; the languor of summer combines with the dreaminess of autumn,—in short, it is an effeminate day, blending well with the emotions excited by a turnip-field. I mislike those brilli-

IN A TURNIP- ant, breezy days, when the whole world seems
FIELD to be in profile, hard and clear cut, when action
(St. Martin's Summer) is a necessity while thought is an impossibility,
when all the sleepy darlings of the Decadence
blink lily-lidded eyes, and curse feebly.

In East Anglia, where I have the misfortune
to spend the summer, we have many such genial,
raucous days,— perchance they get them over,
cheap, from Germany.

Now I watch the weird pageant of sunset defile
dreamily along the horizon at the foot of the
turnip-field. Its hues are dainty, amber and
chrysophrase, and a slightly bored rose flush,
rather suggested than displayed,—a sort of un-
avoidable tribute to the conventionality of sunset,
as the actual plot in a well-written novel is a
mere pandering to tradition. The sombre beauty
of the turnip-field takes the dusk mysteriously.
How shall one express the passion of loneliness
in the heart of a turnip-field? It is impossible!
Only some great poet-painter might paint the
soul of a turnip-field—that evanescent, fleeting
Ego that sighs for a moment with the passing
wind. Maeterlinck might clasp the soul of the
turnip-field in plaintive speech, Tchaikovsky could
breathe the soul of the turnip-field in wistful

music. For the subtlety and the mystery and IN A TURNIP-
the *Sehnsucht* of the turnip-field are his.

FIELD
(St. Martin's Summer)

Into the turnip-field I had brought Pater's bewitching "Prince of Court Painters," and I chanced to linger over the last lines of the tale, —you know them?

"He has been a sick man all his life. He was always a seeker after something in the world that is there in no satisfying measure, or not at all."

Whenever I read these words, I think of Peter Tchaikovsky.

Some day, when we have settled how to spell his name, I will write you a beautiful essay on Tchaikovsky,—the "Pathetic Symphony" shall sing in each phrase, the fugitive witchery of $\frac{5}{4}$ time shall be caught and caged in rhythmic speech, the passionate, vivid colouring—fiery-mournful as autumn leaves—shall glow on the pallid page. But, till that wondrous time, you will have to put up with my customary incapacity.

Tchaikovsky is essentially the poet of Autumn. In his little tone poem "October" he has epitomised himself, and his "Pathetic Symphony" is indeed the apotheosis of Autumn. There is a strange autumnal beauty about Tchaikovsky's music which

IN A TURNIP- has an irresistible attraction for those of us who
FIELD (St. Martin's Summer) are young and sorrowful—a beauty of which the prevailing note is regret; Tchaikovsky's tone poems are as thoroughly instinct with "Past" as St. Martin's Summer or the Second Mrs. Tanqueray. Indeed, their personality is that of those strange days of Autumn which we call St. Martin's Summer—hectic, foreboding, Celtic days.

Tchaikovsky renders Autumn note for leaf. His chords hold the bronzed amber and the withering gold of falling leaves; the wine-dark beauty of the copper beech; the brilliance of the sunburnt beech, with here and there a blood-bright leaf; his symphonies give all the colours of the woods swept by an equinoctial gale,—for Tchaikovsky is tempestuous as he is occult and sorrowful, as he is exquisitely witty and madly gay.

The Spirit of the East is in him. When I listen to his music, I feel in its strange commingling of past and future a blending of Old-World barbarity (spite of Tchaikovsky's innate gentleness) with Modern civilisation and refinement. And when you get an intense Modernity grafted on to the Immemorial Ages, you get something distinctly arrestive in the annals of Art. The

grafting of introspection, morbidness, and a patho- IN A TURNIP-
logical sensitiveness on to the primal emotions FIELD
and a keen sense of humour produces something (St. Martin's
acutely piquant. Summer)

I feel a certain resemblance between Berlioz and, Tchaikovsky, chiefly in the matter of depression, though the Russian is not melodramatically morbid like Berlioz, but rather he is instinct with the gloom of Oriental fatalism without its ameliorating stolidity. One divines that Tchaikovsky's melancholy is but a racial characteristic intensified, while Berlioz's pessimism is an individual idiosyncrasy carefully developed. Tchaikovsky's literary brother is certainly Rossetti; they two have a similar hysterical loveliness, which is enchanting, while they are mutually incoherent, and rich of warm colouring. And they have also in common that strange, foreboding instinct which we associate with the Celtic second-sight. I have often felt "The wind of Death's imperishable wing" foreshadowed in the "Pathetic Symphony."

But then I am a gentle, idealistic soul, and not a musical critic.

Tchaikovsky's music, like most intensely emotional music, is of a feminine nature, yet it inclines

IN A TURNIP- to that sexual compromise which is so much in
FIELD vogue at present; it has too fine an instinct of the
(St. Martin's abstract to be purely feminine, albeit Tchaikovsky's
Summer) regret is rather concentrative than diffusive—as that
of Chopin is diffusive. His is a more poignant and
personal music than the music of Chopin; Chopin
is a narcotic as Wagner is a stimulant; Tchaikovsky
is something of both. He misses the
terrible directness of Wagner and also the im-
personality of Chopin.

He is like my turnip-field. For the turnip-field does not inspire direct emotion, like Wagner, nor yet vague pathos, like Chopin; it gives the mystic passion and sorrow of Tchaikovsky. Who shall fathom the intense modernity of the turnip-field? It is all suggestion, for it expresses nothing. It is all-suggestive as *the* phrase in the first movement of the "Pathétique"—that phrase which springs—like the strange scarlet flame of a poppy—a vivid, alien note among the sombre turnips of the movement,—I mean, it springs out of the dark colour-scheme of the first movement as a poppy springs out of the gloomy turnip-field.

Than Atalanta I can no more help stopping to pick up the golden apple of a fantastic simile,

even though the halt breaks the stride of my IN A TURNIP-
racing pen.

FIELD
(St. Martin's
Summer)

I watch the turnip-field in the mysterious evening; day trembles on the verge of night, summer on the verge of autumn; the sky is clouding over. The infinitely subtle and monotonous turnip-rows bend to a waking breeze. Why is it that this dull, strange landscape should remind me so incessantly of the fiery, tempestuous Tchaikovsky?

Because this landscape epitomises the great Russian Steppes, the monotonous country whence sprung the vivid flower of Tchaikovsky's genius. The turnip-field and the poppy combined with the weather to suggest Tchaikovsky.

There is a sweet monotony in Tchaikovsky's music (of his dreamy mood), the spirit of a sunless, windless afternoon in St. Martin's Summer, when the whole earth seems wrapt in a retrospective trance, and to-day is liker yesterday.

"Only, as I gaze upon those windless afternoons, I find myself always saying to myself involuntarily, 'The evening will be a wet one.'"



. . . THE MUSICAL
. . . . CRITIC
(A DEPRECIATION)



"**F**OURTHLY, I would have all critics made into soup for the deserving poor" (*Utopia of Israfel*).

THE
MUSICAL
CRITIC
(A Depreciation)

I sincerely regret that this little essay does not intend to even mention "Tristan." I thus warn possible readers who might otherwise consider themselves lured to its perusal on false pretences. No; it intends rather to deal with a less lurid and romantic character—the Musical Critic. (It feels in this courageous enterprise much like the Light Brigade at Balaclava.)

From my earliest youth the musical critic has exercised a weird fascination over me. I have ever rejoiced in the contemplation of his autocratic superiority and his supreme confidence in his own discernment. To me the critic is as the organ-grinder to the artistic gutter-child—a being to be envied and admired for ever, a being who lives in an eternal Paradise of delirious joy and power; I yearn to be a musical critic. I want to give M. Jean de Reszke a few useful little hints on voice production, and to explain to M. Paderewski—kindly, but firmly—wherein lies his singular lack of musical feeling.

Pardon this digression from the subject in hand. I will henceforth endeavour to confine my remarks to the musical critic—that strangely

THE
MUSICAL
CRITIC
(A Deprecia-
tion)

attractive biped. I will not hurt him much ; yet mercy shall be tempered with injustice.

His salient characteristic seems to me to be his extraordinary homogeneity. When you have read one of him you have read all of him. He varies infinitesimally in style (or the lack of it) and opinion—indeed, his opinion is really always diametrically opposed—but, roughly speaking, he is unanimous. Accustomed as he is to lay a disproportionate stress on his own judgment and the importance thereof, he can hardly fail to be egotistic. Yet the critic's egotism, like the melancholy of the Slav, like the self-satisfaction of the amateur, is rather a racial characteristic than a personal trait. It is a subtle, all-pervading essence, which perfumes the critic's style. And it is, on occasion, astounding ! Frequently, the critic will give as a reason for depreciating the value of some work of art, the simple fact that he does not like it. Merciful Powers ! as if the opinion of the casual critic were law. I feel sure that the exercise of his calling is fatal to the critic's character.

Now, though the critic is homogeneous and unanimous, he is also various. He is a theme with many variations. He includes the most

fantastic foolery and the dullest sense. At the present moment he inclines more to the former article. In the last century—I go back so far (A Depreciation) lest I should distress you—he used to write like this:—

“The Polish pianist, though skilled in the subtle *tempo-rubato* of the scherzo, failed to interpret the exquisite sentiment of the Slavonic master with that singular grace of pyrotechnique, that deep poetry of rhythm, for which our gifted English pianist is so justly famed.”

Now he writes thus:—

“His art (though not of a distressing mysticism) has something of the weird glamour of moonlight, something of Maeterlinck’s dreamy delicacy. To me, Maeterlinck seems to write wholly by moonlight; his elusive illusions will not bear the glare of day. His notes are strange white flowers of speech—a speech occult, mysterious, yet keenly articulate. Indeed, he has the same affectionate care for notes as Walter Pater had for words,” etc., etc.

Diction is the stumbling-block of our critics. All the younger ones are embryo Walter Paters—sympathetically crossed with the *Sporting Times*—in their own conceit. And with “the

THE
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(A Depreciation)

THE modest pleasantness of boyhood," they let us
MUSICAL know it too! Still, many of them are very
CRITIC charming essayists, and write us pretty little
(A Deprecia- rhapsodies and reveries on Wagner. And if
tion) sometimes they drown themselves in a sea of
words, who shall weep?

The critic is privileged to be hysterical by reason of his necessarily emotional temperament. He goes to hear "Tristan" (I cannot refrain!); the prelude sets him quivering, the love duet makes him feel "like a devil that's been cooked too long," and the "Liebestod" annihilates him with pain and pleasure. Yet his passion is as highly glazed as his shirt-front. He tries to reproduce these sublimated sensations through the imperfect medium of words; and the result is just a little bewildering, though highly satisfactory. From an æsthetic point of view the critic satisfies. Yet he is sometimes useful as well as ornamental. He stimulates young artists by slating their work. (His words are about as persuasive as a bludgeon; they lack the incisive delicacy of the tomahawk.) He causes grateful showers of invective to descend on their delighted heads, he rouses their slumbering self-esteem. Sometimes he sends a chilling blight of approval

on the callow artist (for he is capricious as our climate). Then that artist is indeed cast down and full of sorrow. For praise is deadly poison, (A Depreciation) praise is the confirmation of our worst fears, praise is the hall-mark of the Beast. In short, praise is the brand set on mediocrity.

The critic is likewise instructive. He illustrates the fallacy of human judgment; for he and his colleague invariably take up precisely opposite points of view with reference to any work of art, and they can't both be right; whereas it is quite possible that both of them are wrong. Of course, I do not dream of affirming that there are such arbitrary distinctions as right and wrong in æsthetics—though there may be such in ethics. But in writing of critics one lapses almost unconsciously into the critic's dogmatic style and crude, assertive manner. The critics know but little light and shade, and the chameleonic instinct adapts itself to the critic's colouring.

The critic does not lend himself to grateful diction; he is stiff and unyielding of heart. You shall never picture the critic in fervid verse or frame him in a halo of adjective. The critic's eyes have never gleamed from the sockets of some world-old mummy, nor glowed from out

THE strange Eastern rings of kohl. The critic, I
MUSICAL am convinced, has never incarnated any one
CRITIC of the Roman emperors—a German emperor is
(A Deprecia- more possible—for his vices are not of the
tion) order of pageantry;—frivolous without Wit,
dull without Virtue, he misses even the qualities
of his defects. The critic is hopelessly prosaic
and incurably modern. He is accustomed to
live, if not by his wits, by his sensations, his
jaded emotions. An analogy of the critic were
not difficult to find; and I do not refer to
Marius the Epicurean. Of all tired hedonists,
surely the critic is the weariest! He really
ought not to be permitted to criticise habitually,
he ought to have every other week off—a blessed
rest for his overworked appreciative faculties.
And, indeed, I should be delighted to take his
place. I am eminently suited to it, for I com-
bine in one insufferable personality the savage
brutality of the journalist and the cynical flip-
pancy of the littérateur.

So does the critic!

RUDYARD KIPLING
. (A "DIVARSION")



THOSE of us who read or write habitually in Anglo-Saxon attitudes have, I believe, a keen affection for Rudyard Kipling; and those of us to whom patriotism is an unintelligent popular instinct—akin to the shockingly bald tune of our National Anthem, or the theory that only gulls and Englishmen are good at sea—we too love Kipling.

RUDYARD
KIPLING
(A "Divar-
sion")

Now, a man must be possessed of most uncommon qualities to lead such divers fools by the ear; and I think that Rudyard's drawing quality should, on circumstantial evidence, be his sympathy. He is in sympathy with all Nature and half Art. Now, sympathy is a double-natured thing: sympathy active being a vital force, passive sympathy a gracious pitfall. For instance I, a critic, find that my mind as dissolved in my critical faculty is so exquisitely fluid that I can agree with everyone from personal conviction. Here, then, you have passive sympathy. Rudyard Kipling (admire the collocation!), on the other hand, makes everyone agree with him. And there is active sympathy. Whoever we are, we fall down and worship Rudyard Kipling. We appreciate all the subtle shades of his delicate Chopinesque art, all his forgotten graces—for-

RUDYARD
KIPLING
(A "Divar-
sion")

gotten? Nay! unmarked of critics. One hears much of Mr. Kipling's journalistic, forcible style, but who has remarked its sensitive sympathy? Take the glorious ballad of "Bill 'Awkins," or better still the poem beginning—

"When 'Omer smote 'is bloomin' lyre,
He'd 'eard men sing by land an' sea";—

mark the marvellously sympathetic disposition of aspirates, superimposed or dropped, and tell me if any man in the world save Kipling, Chopin, or Pater could have displayed such an unerring instinct for euphony? Shades of Mr. Kipling's subtlety might be multiplied and shown here, but we do not love long paragraphs, nor yet statistics. Howbeit, it is but piquant to compare Pater with Kipling; to compare that rare porcelain writing of which the exquisite perfection of detail is the priceless charm, that Worth of Language, who clothed the thought in such perfectly fitting and stylishly cut garments of expression, with this genius—and to find Pater beaten on his own ground!

Pater and Kipling are, each in his way, marvellously sympathetic writers; and it is indeed hard to award the palm of Sympathy.

Sympathy springs, of course, from Personality;

and if we look at Kipling's personality, as expressed in his splendid and unequal work, we shall find it overwhelming and irresistible. To me, it has much in common with Tchaikovsky's personality, for Kipling's sympathy is instant and sure as Tchaikovsky's own; his brute strength is quite in keeping with much of Tchaikovsky's orchestration; and his rare erotics, like the Unspeakable's own, are exquisite as rare erotics alone can be. Moreover, there is the same inequality of beauty to be noted in his writings —and the same strange blending of East and West —as in the other's music. But that he inclines rather to the Neolithic Age than to "Modernity," I cannot deny.

Having discovered his bird of a feather, let us deal partly with himself. And he is just about as easy to appreciate comfortably between covers as a thunderstorm would be. He's got so many loose ends that you can't grasp him satisfactorily, and handle him decorously, and put him on his little shelf. You can only absorb him into your ego, and breathe him vaguely forth in words.

I am sure one cannot thoroughly appreciate, or even understand, Kipling unless one has *strolled*

RUDYARD
KIPLING
(A "Divar-
sion")

RUDYARD in India. India has, from the first, been RUDYARD KIPLING yard's house of dreams, and all his best and (A "Divar- most characteristic work has an Indian setting. sion")

His vivid, twopence coloured genius finds its most becoming dressing in Oriental stuffs: when he is Eastern, he is adorable. He is an Eastern Prince and a Western Coster in one.

Now he treats admirably of both the Kilkenny cats of India; but, as he somewhat lacks Mussulman distinction, it is in Hindu portraits, I think, that he most succeeds as an artist. He understands so well the Hindu sentiment, the blood and flowers and sweetmeats of the *feast* ("we haven't the word") Hindu as contrasted with the drab vices of the listless Anglo-Indian; the beautiful, picturesque fatalism of the Oriental in contrast with the cheap restlessness of the European. He works magnificently in contrasts.

He has perfumed India with himself; and wherever you wander in that very large country, a whiff of his personality will surely tease your memory. You drive across the plains in a blinding, hot dust-storm; and immediately—"the End of the Passage" is reached. You hear the tinselled swish of a nautch-girl's skirts; and you think of Lalun, who used to dance "softly

with the moonlight" in the little chamber on RUDYARD
Delhi's red wall. Through the golden mists, KIPLING
tremulous with dawn, comes a pensive cow— (A "Divar-
serenity in her large, soft eyes, and a chaplet of sion")
jasmine flowers, heavy and fragrant, on her velvet
neck; and you consider the Eternal—Feminine,
as deified in "Without Benefit of Clergy." You
meet a dark, slender youth, somewhat less clad
than an erotic poem; serious and gentle and
impassive, dainty as Krishna, stolid as Buddha;
the delicate beauty of his bronze features and his
level, lustrous eyes enhanced by a crimson turban
cunningly twisted; straightway you dream of
Krishna—Mulvaney. You glimpse the monkeys
of the *Jungle Book*, and the Mugger of the
Ganges; and the number of Mrs. Hauksbees you
meet is incredible. Oh, India without Kipling
would be incomplete as Life without Wagner!

I really think that Rudyard reads best in the old, tattered Indian edition with the grey paper cover and the small print. Those of us who are so fortunate as to possess say, *Soldiers Three*, in the original edition, find that Mulvaney's charms spellbind us stronger there than in the neat, new blue volume with the sensible cloth cover. Yet Mulvancy is irresistible in any garb. Was there

RUDYARD KIPLING ever such a seductive personality as Mulvaney's?
(A "Divar-sion") He is an incarnate epigram; he is Tommy deified; he is the only *man* I ever loved. He fascinates me as hopelessly as Don Giovanni seduces our musical critics.

But even Mulvaney reads best in a small volume. Indeed, Kipling must be read in a small volume ; the narrower his limitations, the better. The shorter the tale, the fewer the characters, the more circumscribed the conditions, —the more perfectly does he deal with them. It is in working within limits, most certainly, that this master reveals himself. He loses himself in a large area—in a novel. Moreover, his instinct for selection is not particularly fine : when he has a great deal to choose from, he will introduce wearying technicalities which are about as suitable to his story as one of Czerny's Studies would be to a concert programme. When he is consciously exquisite in miniature,—if he is ever self-conscious,—as in "Mandalay," "At the End of the Passage," "The Drums of the Fore and Aft" (which has the precise effect of the March Movement in Tchaikovsky's "Pathétique" on me), "The City of Dreadful Night," that charming little poem "The Explanation,"—"Without Bene-

fit of Clergy" I have purposely omitted, for so many exotic souls have extolled it,—he gives his critics a kind of emotional emetic, which results in much hysterical adjective. But when he is technical, and seems to have moulded his style on that of "Inquire Within," he makes them yawn and regard their boots sadly. Mr. Kipling has evidently an unfortunate habit of getting up his surprising technical knowledge by means of textbooks. When he shall have grasped the sympathetic lie—that Knowledge is no mere hodge-podge of acquired facts, but Imagination based on Improbability, he will be a still more charming book-companion than he is. Yet far be it from me to deprecate study. Mr. Kipling has studied many things to great advantage—most especially the pathology of humour and of pathos, inasmuch as his humour is almost invariably funny and his pathos pathetic; whereas, with the majority of writers the inversion holds good.

Without doubt, Kipling is an admirable serio-comic—a lion. How tactful are his bewildering changes! He understands the epicureanism of us moderns; he gives us no *table d'hôte* of love or death or laughter; he knows that we prefer our emotions *à la carte*.

RUDYARD
KIPLING
(A "Diversion")

So far we have treated Mr. Kipling almost too well. That he has sometimes offended us, we cannot deny. Let us then proceed to pay our debts of honour. First, he lacks that refinement which has sensuousness for its factor—the only refinement, I think, you will take into consideration. Secondly, he is too elemental and human a creature, he lacks distinction and stand-offishness, he doesn't pique your passion ; in short, he is not *effeminate* enough. Feminine he is, as his tender ferocity proves—but not effeminate. Thus Wagner is feminine : and Tchaikovsky effeminate. And who of us, after hearing Tchaikovsky, dares swear he prefers Wagner ?

I could never idealise Rudyard Kipling, or choose his personality for my house of dreams. You could not either ! He does not linger like a musk rat in my heart ; he has no aloofness at all.

A touch of inhumanity—the antithesis of femininity—is essential to the creation of a grand passion—in every sense of the words ; Kipling misses it. You could not absolutely adore or absolutely detest Rudyard. He is quite distressingly human ; he carries his humanity to the verge of vulgarity. His sentiments and his style

are easy as a dustman's,—and really I find great relaxation in the contemplation of them. Many of our worthy imitators of Pater—forgetting that imitation is in this case but the bald translation from a heavenly tongue, of which indeed “we haven't the word”—make me feel uncomfortable, as the sight of a horse with a tight bearing-rein. Poor beasts! When I see them stepping so beautifully and champing their *mots justes*, a sympathetic shudder quivers chromatically up my soul; I think of the cruel strain on the muscles of the brain, of the sharp and fretting bit. No wonder prose poets are petulant! But why need a man writhe his much pondered thoughts—often seraphically commonplace—into phrases suggesting a python trying to digest an uncommonly tough buffalo? Oh, *our* evil is wrought by lack of brain, and not by lack of thought!

RUDYARD
KIPLING
(A “Diversion”)

In Pater's case, and we will shift our simile a few points to the east, “the velvet scabbard held a sword of steel.” Whereas most of our velvet—should I not rather say plush?—scabbards are empty. “With form and void,” says the revised version. Moreover, we imitators all overdo the thing. The crude characteristics are here, unsoftened by temperamental atmosphere; the

RUDYARD KIPLING (A "Divar-sion") glaze is comparatively rough. With what relief may we not then turn to the rude journalistic pottery of Kipling? That is at least genuine stuff. For remember, that when your qualities are another's your defects will surely be your own (and thank Heaven for that!); otherwise we should hardly recognise your existence.

Kipling is always splendidly and arrogantly Rudyard Kipling,—even when he is vaingloriously patriotic. The name! you suggest. Well—of course. With such a name any one of us might have been original. Yet even now, under the chilling blight of our own wretched labels, we are at superhuman pains to avoid being commonplace; we forget that it is vain to struggle with Fate; we are fearful and careful. Rudyard is *sans gêne* as a mannerless infant. He is perhaps the *enfant terrible* of English Literature; violating her secrets and her sanctities; savagely instinctive, shockingly natural, and compellingly charming all the same.

He has the limitations of the child and the savage. Let us consider his style of diction. This, you will observe, is, for all its variety, limited. As Pater's diction is restricted, so is Kipling's limited. Disentangle the meanings of restriction

and limitation. The costermonger's vocabulary is limited; few would call it restricted. The language of poetry is restricted; none could term it limited. Yet we use the terms "limited" and "restricted" indiscriminately; we say a limited edition when we mean a restricted one; we say a restricted circulation when we mean a limited one. These terms are as hopelessly confused as the qualities of Personality and Egotism. Limitation, you see, is the natural quality; Restriction, the artistic (artificial) one. Nature and Art. Kipling and Pater. Fafner und Siegfried: Siegfried und Fafner. But which is which, you must decide for yourself.

And now, even if paradox is a little bit rococo, consider the variety of Kipling's lingo. He is a superhuman linguist,—as an expert in dialect he has no rival. I like him best when he is writing the stately Persian, or the Cockney Tommy, or the Irish Mulvaney. How soul-satisfying are his Soldier-songs! How delicious are his little fitful snatches of verse, presumably after the Persian! On second thoughts, his Eastern love-songs are perhaps a little too passionate and energetic; they lack the scented languor and the lazy ferocity of the East. Oriental songs

RUDYARD
KIPLING
(A "Divar-
sion")

RUDYARD KIPLING (A "Divar-sion") should be sickly sweet as the champak flower or Chopin's "Chant Polonais" No. 5 ;—how often have I purred over the unspeakabilities of that pianoforte song! it is a languorous essay in laughter, a kind of poignant joke—confident, a little too confident (Who sups with the devil should have a long spoon !) of its impenetrability —against the Eternal Feminine. And even thus are the true Persian erotics. The Persians have—wisely, I think—modelled their songs on their mousing cats. Poetry, like cats, should be ever gentle, indolent, and fierce. Kipling's songs are too vivid. Yet certainly in one or two he nearly draws blood (surely the test of true Art !):—

"Under the stars he mocked me. Therefore I killed him." Look at the inexorable gentleness of that! its childlike simplicity and sweet reasonableness. Think how Swinburne would have described the stars! Think how anyone else would have orchestrated the provocation and condoned the revenge! There is a quiet strength about that line, as it stands, which takes you as sympathetically as Wagner does. (And again, just think what that man might have done to a critic !)

To a hysterical nature—such as a critic's must always be—these velvet, rock-like words come

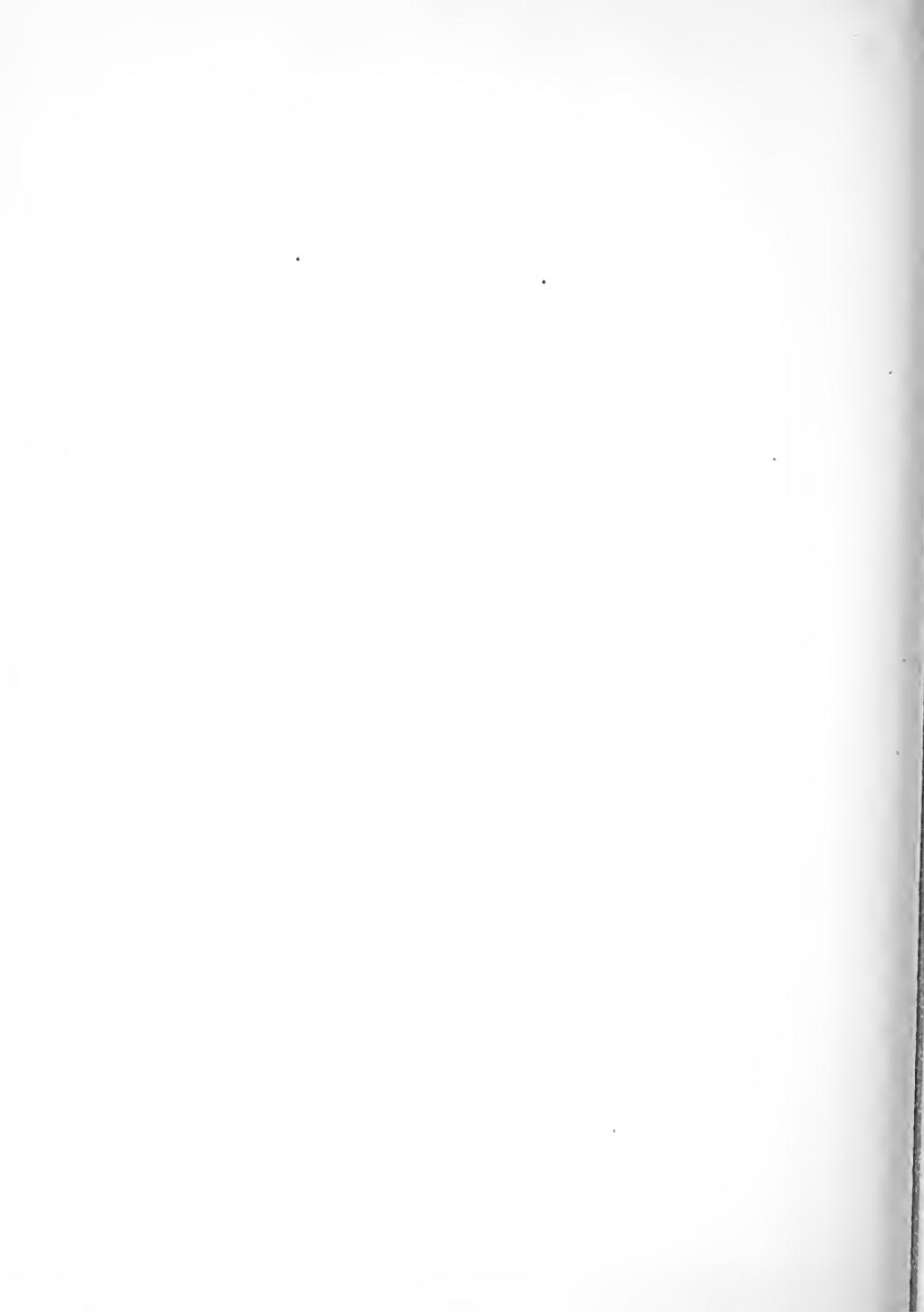
as an armchair; we find them so restful and so soothing. Hysterical natures love to be dominated. Violence can never dominate, it can only submit. Buddha dominates us sceptics because he is never at the pains—or the indiscretion—to even admit his existence.

RUDYARD
KIPLING
(A "Divar-
sion")

For us, Kipling creates an occasional powerful peace, which we, his critics, can hardly resist. Oh, just sometimes, Kipling is divine! But this, his divinity, is by no means illimitable; indeed, aloof from the pretty trick of combining insult with a subtle undercurrent of flattery, I must still declare that Rudyard has his limits. And, alas! Rudyard misses the saving grace of exclusiveness, which should accompany and sanctify limitation of any kind. Also, his Catholicity of Sympathy has a dangerous trend towards Philanthropy. So, though he registers a mean temperature of 85° in the shade—he has touched the Century.



“IMAGINARY PORTRAITS”
. (FROZEN MUSIC)



I HAVE lost my pencil. I sought my sanctuary of pine-trees with the lamentable intention of writing an essay. But since my pencil slipped from my fervid grasp into an adjacent rabbit-hole, I have been compelled to do nothing save lie on my back, munching crimson rose-leaves, and gaze into the luminous blue dome of Heaven, airily tessellated with white cloud in ever-varying design, as I reflect that the sun in the West is not half so beautiful as the amber light in the East window of St. Peter's in Rome.

The fretted aisles of the pine forest are all hung with wistful music—a Dorian music of Autumn, though the month is August. I admire the squirrels' bright fur as they leap from branch to branch, breaking the flowing cadence of wild-wood green with fiery, little staccato runs of Dvořák-like waywardness, and I recall Arthur Somervell's quaint little piece—"Squirrels" with its fantastic, leaping runs in a minor key, plaintively gay.

I shut my eyes, and the sound of the sea sighs round me, above me, the cries of seagulls crest the hissing foam,—have seagulls fury, tawny tails?

For companionship I have brought my black

“IMAGIN-
ARY POR-
TRAITS”
(Frozen
Music)

retriever Carlissimo; he pursues entomological research, chiefly amongst his own fur, while I follow the elusive flutterings of my thoughts. Like the singers in François Coppée's poem, we hunt

“— moi, la strophe,
et toi,
Le papillon d'or.”

Alas! Carlissimo's quest is not so poetical as that of the golden butterfly.

Yet around us the air is enamelled with strange blue butterflies, little turquoise jewels hovering capriciously over the scented, sunlit grass, like poets seeking the *mot juste*. And while Carlissimo abandons himself to the luxury of his scientific pursuits, I reflect on the comparative impossibility of procuring a drink, and raise passionate dark eyes to a pitiless blue sky. Then I ruined my cuff groping in the rabbit-hole for my pencil, which I didn't find, and then I threw myself on the grass and wept bitterly.

At my feet lay a book of sombre cover, wide margins, and delicate print. And if you, with that curiosity distinguishing the Uneducated, had glanced at the title, you would have read *Imaginary Portraits*. I often live with a volume

of Walter Pater; I like the chaste severity of Macmillan's invariably hideous binding. Pater can withstand that shade of invisible green which suggests churchyard yews and bluebottle flies. Indeed, in his case the ambiguous green is almost symbolic. For the green in Pater's work is so studiously restrained, so artfully put in, that one is hardly conscious of its colour; it is dream-like as the delicate cruelty which peeps out here and there in Chopin's sensitive art.

And that rose-jacynth cruelty, too,—one is hardly conscious of its colour.

This Walter Pater has a wonderful individuality—elusive, penetrating as a perfume—which his extraordinary lack of egotism accentuates. Walter Pater, so delicately amorous of Youth, has a womanish daintiness about him; the pale perfection of his diction is almost a physical joy to the reader. May I say that it has something of the soothing inhumanity of the song of the bird in "Siegfried"? It is a haven of rest from the fierce vitality of Journalism: all its tints are dream-like yet vivid, elusive yet how clear. All the chameleonic words take their tone-colouring from their theme; they paint wonderful little pictures for the mind's eye, they express that

which paint would be powerless to express. The diction in "A Prince of Court Painters" is Watteau transcribed into words; it is Watteau's art run on parallel lines of literature.

Pater is an unequalled artist in words. (Ah! perhaps you have heard of him before!) With him, language gains the elusive grace and significance of music—a subtle music of strings, far removed from the Dorian raptures of Wagner, though not far from the orchestrative style of Wagner. He has disarmed literature of its canine bluntness, investing it with the feline charm of music.

Pater's prose is indeed curiously like music; it has the same rhythmic flow checked by divine little touches of sudden incoherency and inconsequence, studiedly unstudied as the *tempo-rubato* of some free Volkslied polished out of recognition by Chopin.

Someone entirely charming once said that Pater has a finer instinct of word-painting than of word-music; and I suppose this is actually true. But music, besides being physically audible, is mental, and the music of Pater's thought is undeniable; his thoughts are too subtle and fugitive to be painted; his words seem just

to "*effleurer*" his meaning in a wholly musical manner.

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(Frozen Music)

I have compared Pater's art to that of Chopin. But the comparison is not altogether just. For Chopin's art is like the ripple of water in August moonlight, like critics' crystal tears under the pale moonshine; it is all motion and emotion; while Pater's joys, one instinctively feels, are gold and ivory, apes and peacocks—a glittering mosaic of picturesque speech;—with him the word is not the mere symbol, but is the jewel itself. Wherefore Pater's art is a little bit cold, as decorative art cannot fail to be; a fervent absorption in technique is ever chilling to sentiment. Yet there is no tendency to pyrotechnical display in Pater's work, movement and flash do not appeal to him. Wherefore carven stone affects him unduly. I could imagine him mooning happily round wonderful Nuremberg, translating that old Architecture which is the New into that new Literature which is the Old, with the aid of that inimitable dictionary his brain. He loved to reproduce local colour in words; each of the imaginary portraits has its distinctive atmosphere. "Sebastian van Storck," in its quaint reflex of Holland, touched with a delicacy

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foreign to the Dutch, is the symbolised *Schwind-sucht* of the country, a type of the land engulfed by the grey North Sea, yet rich in local colour and imported brightness as Holland itself. To me, "Denys L'Auxerrois" seems, from a purely sensuous point of view, to have something of the gracious temper and *tempo* of the more suave moods of Dvořák, expressed in some Bohemian dance, *rubato*, wayward; such a valse as invited more to dream than to dance.

"Duke Carl of Rosenmold" does not lend himself so kindly to platitude. He does not give such a definite picture as each of his brethren in the same volume gives. He sketches the debatable land very daintily, with due regard to the tiled roofs and storks' nests of Strasburg, with keen appreciation of the picturesque value attaching to Hans Klapper the Goblin, "that very German goblin," and his awkward gambols "on the long, slumberous, northern nights." But as "Sebastian" missed the crudeness of Holland, so does "Duke Carl" miss the homeliness of Germany, investing it, indeed, with the grace of Austria. Which is quite wrong of him. Also, he shows a reprehensible tendency to admire the cheap beauty of the Rhine, that exploded

Byronic scenery, where a robber's castle crests every hill that ought to own a robber's castle, where every detail of the landscape seems to have been arranged by a "property" man in connection with Thomas Cook. Mr. Tauchnitz is a formidable rival to the Rhine in the eyes of all right-minded persons.

Yet in spite of his open admiration of the Rhine (expressed in words that almost persuade me to admit that chestnut's glories), Walter Pater is an intensely sympathetic writer. He gives you the essence of a beautiful style, with just sufficient water—sparkling soda—to make it particularly palatable. I read Pater, and I feel that the rarefied atmosphere of pure style is uplifting my journalistic soul. I read the charming essays of Mrs. Alice Meynell, and I feel as if I were eating (or is it drinking?) Liebig's Extract. Indeed, I might be assimilating "Vimbos, an ox in a teacup."

When shall we grasp the difference between restraint and repression, concentration and compression?

I 'ope never!

Yet if you glance over that delicious book lying face downwards on the grass at my feet,

you will find your dull brain a little enlightened on these points. But chiefly you will remark what perfection diction is capable of attaining,— Abt Vogler and his organ were nothing to Walter Pater and his dictionary. If you take any interest in words and the sympathetic disposition and juxtaposition of syllables, Pater's diction will enrapture your young soul.

He is a magician, he reanimates words dead by constant use. Now as everyone, roughly speaking, is in the habit of using words wholesale, these articles have sunk, through no fault of their own, to a very low level of artistic excellence and eloquence. For the meaning of every word is now a foregone conclusion, and all verbal complexities have been stereotyped into mere coherency. It is very hard to be incoherent nowadays—almost impossible. And if one cannot be incoherent, how can he be expressive? Music has taught us that suggestion is more expressive than declaration (and have not the Old Decadents seconded music?). Incoherency opens a wide field for suggestion and conjecture. But no grouping of words is incoherent now, it is only a New Journalism or an Old Decadence. Even the musical one, critic or amateur, writing on Wagner,

is merely coherently inane—inanely coherent. This Impossibility of being Incoherent accounts for the decadence of the Essay. The ideal essay—a glittering tangle of irrelevancies—is practically dead. The real essay—a compact treatise on a given subject—is legion.

This dying out of Incoherency affects our finer souls deeply.

Have you never felt a passionate desire for new terms of expression? Do you not weary of the old hackneyed words? The word "Love" has robbed me of every spark of affection I ever possessed. For the word and the thought and the feeling are inseparably joined—only music can put them asunder; thought and feeling and word breathe of innumerable novels by inexhaustible females, of rhymes and rhymes and rhymes by poets in various minor keys. Wherefore the symbolic word rouses only a weary wrath in the intelligent, sensitive soul. Soon we shall be reduced to expressing ourselves by Music or by Silence.

The modern cult of pauses and dashes and dots seems to indicate a trend towards silence, while it suggests, at the same time, the rests that you find in bars of music. Which tends to prove my

theory. What a relief it will be when we are spared making that terrible "made conversation"—that cheap ready-made conversation which we pick up from each other, wherein none of the words fit their subject, and the phrases bag so vilely at the knees.

I myself am possessed of an Oriental stolidity, and I find it a positive pain to talk to the casual comer.

I have always admired those Arab chiefs who, when paying a formal call, never speak unless they have something to say. With writing, it is of course just otherwise that my admiration goes. Pater rarely has anything to say, and invariably says it divinely, though sometimes a little too connectedly. For the most part, his words are coherent as musical notes arranged by a great artist with an unparalleled instinct for and a perfect knowledge of orchestration. Pater's verbal symphonies are so exceedingly elaborate that you must needs hear them once or twice before you thoroughly enjoy them. On the first reading they bewilder you a little,—after the manner of Wagner. Indeed, I think Pater should not be read at all, he should be sipped—for Pater is a blessed literary Benedictine, to be sipped only—

and by the discriminating. Pater is a blissful pipe to smoke,—none of your common clays, but the turquoise and silver hookah of the East. Pater is an atmosphere to breathe, to live in; an atmosphere which has ever a touch of sanctity.

Pater seems to rear a Gothic edifice of words —glorious with stained-glass imagery, stern with smooth-sculptured phrase,—wherein his cloistral fancies pace, leisurely swinging censers of chased, chaste gold, whence rises the magic incense of his personality, obscuring all else, veiling all things in its dim, rich haze. Pater was born centuries too late: he should have been a monk of the Middle Age. I suspect that in some former incarnation he was a monk; an indefinable saintly aureole clings ever about his style, a cowl of asceticism overhangs his rippling curls of expression. Without doubt, he was a monk. And the quaint mediæval legend, which you will not find anywhere but here, tells that the holy Father's *sole peccadillo* was induced by his fastidious taste; he utterly refused to wear any horsehair (shirt) save that of the priceless silver-grey Arab mares of the Prophet's own breed.

And once he wept over the treasured, tonsured

head of a Brother with "curled yellow hair and eyes of vair." This delicate fastidiousness which Pater, above all writers, possesses is a potent charm. Pater is so gentlemanly an artist in thought and word—particularly in word. And that is as it should be.

He combines the gentle, sympathetic languor of the amateur with the supreme capability of the professional. He displays the amateur's keen delight in technicalities ; he arranges and handles the beautiful words with never-wearying pleasure, and he has his verbal pets—of which I venture to name pensive, quaint, picturesque, delicate, ivory and gold. These words are with him veritable *leit-motifs* such as you find in Wagner's operas ; in truth, Pater's symphonic prose has the true Wagnerian cadence, the recurring motif, the inexhaustible orchestration, the predominance of harmonic over melodic invention. But, in the main, Pater and Wagner are widely divergent paths to Paradise ; their manners and mannerisms of expression are similar, but their sentiments and their subjects are particularly dissimilar. Think of the Venusberg music and, say, "A Prince of Court Painters" ; contrast Marius with Tristan. The famous passage on "La Gioconda" has

certainly a glamour of the Flower Maidens in "Parsifal," who half succeeded in charming that Pateresque youth (but they soon found out that Parsifal's pleasure in their beauty had all the impersonality of true artistic appreciation). Wagner's vivid, vital types are very different from Pater's courtly dreamers,—Parsifal and Marius alone just touch hands on a subject of Flower Maidens.

Pater is indeed a rest, a nest, a refuge from the wearying eroticism of the Day. We are ever forced to unwillingly swallow the Eternal Theme —in jam of minor poetry—in treacle of serial story—in milk and water of anonymous journalism. I tolerate it in the intoxicating Wagner, for Music gives you the emotion without the word, while Literature—save on very rare occasions—gives you the word without the emotion.

Mr. Pater is agreed with Plato on the superiority of the art of Music (though how Plato could have known anything about music —before Wagner or even Beethoven—beats me!). Truly, it is the indefiniteness of Music that attracts Pater—the absolute annihilation of Fact, the infinity of expression, and likewise the

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TRAITS"

(Frozen
Music)

symmetrical scheme of notes—the homogeneity of the whole. Pater's prose is of all English prose the nearest akin to music—I do not mean in actual sound, but in spirit. It is certainly colder than music can ever be—"frozen music," one might term it. And that title covers both its architectural and its musical sides. I am afraid I must refer you again to Wagner. For the beautiful monotony of Wagner's style you shall find paralleled in that of Pater. The Prelude of "Tristan," which resembles nothing more than a sea-tide advancing and receding, has the same long-drawn cadence as "Marius." You will find you can read "Marius" very pleasantly on the sea-shore, if you are careful to take your *tempo*—slightly *rubato*—from the beat of the waves on the crisp, bright pebbles. Moreover, be your grief tempered by the merry voice of the itinerant ballader—Yes! the nigger on the beach.

I have endeavoured—successfully, I think—to get myself as much involved as possible throughout this essay. I have contradicted myself several times; and the inextricable charm of the Incoherent pervades my pages. But with such a malleable charming subject as Pater, what

can one do? His charm is so indefinable and elusive that one can no more catch it in words than Carlissimo can catch his fugitive dreams. Yet, like Carlissimo, one hunts unavailingly, and we shall find it at the heart of the next analogy.

“IMAGINARY PORTRAITS”
(Frozen Music)



. MUSIC
AND LITERATURE
(MR. CLIFFORD HARRISON'S
. PIANO-COVER)



THE Steinway Hall, when charmingly decorated MUSIC AND LITERATURE
(Mr. Clifford Harrison's Piano-Cover) for Mr. Clifford Harrison's no less charming recitals, always seems to me to be something between a swimming-bath and a Turkish divan. The skylight inlaid with stained glass, the dimness, the slightly subterranean atmosphere, and the enervating glory of the platform, all help to increase this illusion. But soon the swimming-bath is merged in the divan; my gaze rests fascinated on the piano-cover of peacock-blue and blazing gold, wanders thence into a wilderness of gorgeous hangings—terra-cotta, amber, chrysophrase, all subtly blending into a harmonious glare—if such a thing be possible. Flowers too, flowers in barbaric Eastern bowls, marigolds, autumn leaves, marguerites,—an Adelaide Anne Procter-like languor steals over me; I palpitate with sentiment. I look round the hall. It is filled, and the feminine element predominates greatly—women of all sexes I was going to say; but I must admit that the primeval woman is most in evidence, the pretty Society woman, the plain female of uncertain age and susceptible heart, and the pig-tailed schoolgirl who is brought because the entertainment is such a very suitable one. I form one of a despicable minority of the

MUSIC AND impossible sex. A lugubrious, distant clock LITERATURE strikes three. Presently Mr. Harrison appears, (Mr. Clifford Harrison's Piano-Cover) and we all laugh and weep alternately for a couple of hours.

Mr. Harrison's art is a bewildering one. It is so subtly inwrought and intertwined with what the critics call "claptrap"; while at the same time it is so very admirable. One feels that this mystifying claptrap is introduced mainly to soften the hearts of the public, to induce them to assimilate the good art therewith—in the perennial powder and jam fashion.

And Mr. Harrison's beautiful Steinway piano helps to carry out his scheme, for its tone is of a sugary sweetness—quite "virginibus puerisque," —it breathes such sentiment as our Aunts love to preserve between covers on their drawing-room tables, the very strawberry jam of sorrow.

I always miss the supreme, delicate charm of the piano in the tone of a Steinway—the Steinway tone has too much colour in it; it lacks the ivory softness and the unique moonlit mystery which one associates with the tone of a piano. Passion it has, but not the strange white fire; I never like to hear Chopin played on a Steinway. But as an accompaniment to such tangible things

as words the Steinway tones serve admirably; MUSIC AND
sympathetic and sentimental are they, and won- LITERATURE
derfully indeed does Mr. Harrison subordinate (Mr. Clifford
them to the voice. I think that sometimes the Harrison's
music follows the words in a manner bordering Piano-Cover)
on the grotesque—as when Heaven is represented
by a petulant run up the treble, or Mystery by a
lugubrious, indefinite chord somewhere in the
depths of the bass; one cannot help noticing these
details. For detail plays so large a part in Per-
fection.

But certainly music aids illusion; the fate of
the hunter who perished in the quest of the silver
bird (Olive Schreiner's "Hunter") proves infinitely
more touching when it is enhanced by the
sweet, inarticulate murmurs of the sympathetic
piano. And musical rhythmic verse gains new
beauty from a musical setting, its significance
seems to be thereby intensified. I like to be
harrowed, and I find that recitations with music
harrow me deeper than recitations neat. But I
like to be consistently harrowed; when I am
feeling nice, I don't like to have my mood
suddenly changed to laughter and merriment,
and then back again to melancholy — this
switchback of the emotions I find very wearing.

MUSIC AND LITERATURE Mr. Harrison can change his mood as easily as I
(Mr. Clifford change my views, and his serio-comic faculties
Harrison's are astounding. He can also change the mood
Piano-Cover) of his audience in a fascinating, hypnotic way.
Sometimes he realises the importance of being
earnest too completely.

Now, a fool taking himself seriously is a pathetic and humanising spectacle (and I am careful never to provide it for you), but a wise man taking himself seriously is a woe beyond words,—flat champagne alone surpasses it. Like Mr. Hichens, Mr. Harrison sometimes insists too much on his effect to produce it, and his thrilling whispers wander unavailingly across the flower-pots and the draperies and the smart hats of the audience.

I often feel tempted to wish that he would choose better programmes. I think he rather wastes himself on comparative rubbish, as pianists waste their faculties on fearful and wonderful Liszt "arrangements"—to please the public, I suppose. For when Mr. Harrison recites really good poetry or prose, the result is charming: one forgets the piano-cover, and the image of Adelaide Anne Procter grows faint. It is a pity that so many of the most delightful writings in the world

are quite unfit (if not for publication) for recitation. Indeed, most of the poetry that you can repeat is hardly worth repeating. Still, we are told that "it is in working within limits that the Master reveals himself," and I think Mr. Harrison might find some very acceptable "bits" without having to fall back on Alfred Austin or yet Gabriele D'Annunzio's account of "Tristan."

MUSIC AND
LITERATURE
(Mr. Clifford
Harrison's
Piano-Cover)

Mr. Harrison has an extraordinary power of creating an atmosphere; his words convey pictorial impressions to the mind's eye ; you see what he is describing, see it quite vividly, whether it be the dancing girls of the as yet unregenerate Siddârtha sleeping within the purdah's glittering fence, or the amateur photographer.

I think that his power is mostly a hypnotic one,—at all events, it partakes of the nature of wizardry. In truth, it is much like that of the Indian snake-charmer who makes his cobra dance to whatever tune he pleases. From the serpent to the woman is not a far cry,—and they are nearly all women at Clifford Harrison's recitals. Indeed, the whole entertainment breathes a gracious air of femininity, which is humanising and elevating to our masculine flippancy. Women (dear things !) always take themselves seriously,—indeed

MUSIC AND LITERATURE one has to exercise superhuman tact in dealing with them. But perhaps I am digressing unduly, (Mr. Clifford Harrison's Piano-Cover) —my subject be my perfect excuse! Yes! Clifford Harrison is magnetic and occult, but, at times, his rendering of the Weird has that slight Maskelyne and Cooke element which is the pit-fall of Mystery in Beauty.

We hear much nowadays anent the association of Music and Literature; in Mr. Harrison's art their union is most satisfactory, though Literature undoubtedly has the best of it, and Music takes the woman's place,—the gorgeous, emblazoned robe of the Steinway symbolises this. I cannot forget that piano-cover. I never lose consciousness of it throughout the recital. When the poppied hat of gold Persephone in front of me obstructs my view of it, I am grateful; it haunts me down the street.

As I stream pensively out of the hall, at five o'clock, these words sing in my brain—

“ His gentle spirit rolls
In the melody of souls ”—

which is pretty, but I don't know what it means.

With such a thin gold thread is the web of Life inwrought!

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